

PRETENDERS:

OR,

The Town Unmaskt.

A

COMEDY.

Acted at the Theatre in *Little
Lincolns-Inn-Fields.*

By His Majesty's Servants.

Written by Mr. *Dilke.*

Ficta Voluptatis Causa sint proxima veris.

L O N D O N ,

Printed for *Peter Buck*, at the sign of the *Temple*,
near the *Inner-Temple-Gate* in *Fleet-street*, 1698.

✶ Newly published the two last new Tragedies, viz. *Caligula* Emperor of Rome, by Mr. *Crowne*. *Fall's Discovery*, or *Love in Ruins*, a Tragedy; with a Preface in answer to Mr. *Dryden's* Copy of Verses, prefixed to a Comedy, called *Heroick Love*.

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T O
THOMAS BARNARDISTON, Esq;
O F
Ketton in Suffolk.

S I R,

AFTER a Poet has made his appearance upon the Stage, the next thing he generally does, is to take his station in some great man's Anti-chamber; there to screw himself into a protection for his Play, with a Paper stufft full of Bombast-encomiums of his new Patrons high Merits and wonderful Qualifications: Which perhaps, till that time, were as little heard of in the world, as the Poet was known to his thus applauded *Mæneas*.

The business of this Dedication to you, Sir, is quite otherwife; for as I have the honour to be very well known to You, so I take this opportunity, as well to express the sentiments of my esteem for You, as to publish my thanks for past Obligations. A poor Tribute indeed! But as 'tis my present All, so it's wholly at your service.

A 2

And

The Epistle

And now, while I am paying my Addresses to a *Barnardiston*, methinks I have as copious a subject to enlarge upon as I cou'd wish. But lest I shou'd seem to incur the reflection I have thought fit to make on others, I shall only hint at what I cou'd not possibly omit. I shou'd exasperate the Country. You live in, shou'd I not take notice with what a due regard they have all fixt their Eyes upon You. Nor is there any question to be made. but that in this their well-grounded hopes, You will even out-do their Expectations. And tho' *Lincolnshire* as well as *Suffolk* claims an Interest in You, yet the latter has that to say of your Family, which can scarce be parallell'd in any other.

That *Ketton* shou'd have been the continued Mansion-house of seven and twenty Sir *Thomas Barnardistons*, successively from Father to Son, with but the interruption of one Sir *Nathaniel*, Your great Grandfather, is a thing highly remarkable. And since the Honour of Baronet is but of late date in the world, no doubt but that badge of Knighthood was still conferr'd upon these brave Ancestors of Yours for their fidelity to the Crown. and as a reward for the services they severally afforded their respective Princes. This noble train of Sir *Thomas's* is at present clos'd with the now Sir *Thomas Barnardiston*, your truly honourable Father, a person every way so conspicuous, that he has no occasion for the least touch of a Poet's varnish, to gloss over his true and real worth. All that I shall say upon this account is, that being so well

Dedicatory.

well acquainted with that tender Union and Correspondence that is berwixt you, I may safely answer for your joyning with me in an

O Utinam sero in Calum Redeat!

After this, may your Lineage run the length of time; and may *Ketton* never want a *Barnardiston* for its Proprietor, till the world wants a Mortal for its Inhabitant.

Thus, Sir, as I began my Epistle in a method something uncusomary for one of my profession; and having all along forbore to harangue you with fulsome Flattery, so I shall beg leave to conclude without so much as side glancing a single Compliment upon my self, and let me tell you, that's a great piece of self-denyal in a Poet of this Age. I am confident, that as you wou'd be apt to scorn me for the one, so you'd laugh at me for the other. If I can find out any value to put upon my self, 'tis not in respect of my performances, but for the good fortune I have to be,

3. SIR,

Your most Obédient,

and most obliged Servant,

Tho. Dilke,

with a small number of friends, and a few
of the best of the country, and
your going with me, and

I am, Sir, your obedient servant

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T

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N

Lord *Courtipoll*, A vain empty-skull'd Lord, pretending himself to be highly interested at Court, and consulted in all State-affairs. A keeping Gallant to Mrs. *Minx*. } Mr. *Twimond*.

Sir *Wealthy Plainer*, A Rich close Curmudgeon, pretending to be wholly decay'd in his Fortunes. A private Cully to Mrs. *Minx*. } Mr. *Underhill*.

Sir *Bellamour Blunt*, A plain downright Speaker. A Country Gentleman, of good sense and knowledge. In love with *Ophelia*. } Mr. *Kynaston*.

Vainbroat, A loose talkative Gentleman of the Town. } Mr. *Bowman*

Broakage, A poor Bankrupt Merchant, pretending himself to be very rich. A pretender to the Widow. } Mr. *Trefuse*.

Captain *Bounceby*, A blustering cashier'd Subaltern Officer, pretending himself a Captain. Another pretender to the Widow. } Mr. *Erigh*.

Nicky crack, A sly knavish fellow, who pretends to all the honesty imaginable. } Mr. *Bowen*.

Prim, Lord *Courtipoll's* Valet de Chambre, a poor Scoundrel, but pretending himself to be of a Gentlemans Family. } Mr. *Baily*.

W O M E N.

Widow *Thoresbift*, Left low in the World, but setting up for a vast Fortune, } Mrs. *More*.

Minx, Her Sister, a cunning intreaguings Coquet, who pretends to have been bred altogether in the Country. Kept by Lord *Courtipoll*. } Mrs. *Perryng*.

Ophelia, Daughter to Sir *Wealthy Plainer*; a virtuous young Lady, privately in love with Sir *Bellamour Blunt*. } Mrs. *Bowman*.

Sweetny, Sister to *Nicky crack*: a Boarding Landlady. A fawning dissembling Hypocrite, pretending to much Piety and Devotion. } Mrs. *Lee*.

Nibs, A Servant-maid in the Family. A cunning tattling wench, but a great pretender to secrecies. } Mrs. *Lawson*.

Doll, Servant to *Minx*; of the same pretension as her Mistress. } Mrs. *Willis*.

SCENE Covent Garden.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken By Mr. Bowen, coming upon the Stage in a great buff, follow'd by a Prompter, with a Paper in his hand; and by a Boy with a Bottle and Glass.

I Won't speak this Prologue — Go tell him so;
If he no Wit, I can some Manners shew.
I curse the Criticks! Rail at Men of Sense;
Gadzooks I wonder at his impudence.
Besides —

He shou'd have chose some tender Cherub face,
Whose melting smiles cou'd so bewitch the place,
That might have forc'd him to a state of Grace.
Such a queer Phiz, as mine, on my Salvation,
Will ne re retrieve him from his late Damnation.
And yet methinks, I'm leath to lose him quite,
First let me drink, then try to do him right.

Takes the Glass. Here you Gall'ry Spankers: a Health to those
That value Brown, and scorn the Latb-backs Beaus.
Those City Ladies who to quench a flame,
From their own Counters spring the lussy game. (Drinks.)

Fills again. Next to all sound Masks-Tup, (Kecks) not one drop will down,
This plainly shews there's none in all the Town.

Fills it up. Come a Bumper to th' Pit — No doubt but you
Expect from me, a Health entirely new.
Your thought; I wou'd not willingly forestal;
If this Play's damn'd, Confusion to ye all. (Drinks.)

Fills again. Sirrah, be sure you fill me nicely now,
To the side boxes While I on either side profoundly bow.

Gad, sure to Men of so much Grace and Feature,
There should be left a spice of Human Nature.
Then let your Goodness more conspicuous be,
And don't you snuff at every fault you see.

So may your Mistresses be ever kind,
And none of all your Imperfections find. (Drinks.)
Till thus you stand, full of your salvas posselt,
But leave good drudging Sparks to do the rest.

Takes another. Now on my Knees, I'll veneration pay,
And heartily Drink, (Drinks.) To what I durst not say.
In short, Ladies —

Rising up. Thus does our Poet for your mercysue,
And swears he dreads no other Stars but you.

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THE
PRETENDERS:
OR,
The Town Unmaskt.

ACT I. Scene Convent-Garden Piazza's.

Sir Bellamour Blunt and Vainthroat, in Riding habits, as just come to Town.

Vain. **W**ELL, Sir *Bellamour*, how shall we dispose of ourselves, now we are arriv'd at this glorious Town of London?

Sir Bell. Why faith, *Vainthroat*, I'm not well acquainted with the Town; but by what I do know, thou mayst e'n choose what corner of it thou thinkst fit, and yet never want objects for either Ridicule or Detraction; and those are thy two darling faculties.

Vain. Lord, Sir, why shou'd you say that of me, who am the nicest man living of all peoples Reputations?

Sir Bell. Reputation! I'd undertake there wou'd not be a single grain of such a thing in the Universe, were it in the power of thy Tongue to blast it.

Vain. Come, Sir *Bellamour*, I must tell you, that you have got a damn'd unbecoming quality, to speak always what you think, 'tis the absurdest thing that a Gentleman of this age can be guilty of.

Sir Bell. Would it not be more absurd, either to speak without thinking, or impudently to belye a man's own opinion?

B

Vain.

The Pretenders : Or,

Vain. Not at all I vow ; I find you are, as you say your self, not well acquainted with the Town: why all Gentlemen of good assurance and right Town breeding, first never think of what they say, and then don't care one farthing whether a syllable of it be truth or not.

Sir Bell. For that reason I'll avoid all Town Company, to prevent being shockt with the insolence of Lies, or stunn'd with the eternal sputter of Nonsense.

Vain. At the present we'll wave disputes — 'Let's settle our selves into convenient Lodgings, get splendid Equipages, and then Beau it about the Town.

Sir Bell. VVhat the Devil dost mean by that foolish word, Beau ?

Vain. VVhy saith the title and qualifications of a Beau, have long been the standing mark for the random shot of all the Poets of the Age. And to very little purpose. — The Beaus bravely stand their ground still e'gad — The truth on't is, they are a sort of case-harden'd animals, as incapable of Scandal, as they are insensible of any impression either from Satyr or good Sense.

Sir Bell. And prithee how must these case-harden'd animals be distinguish'd ?

Vain. Barring Reflection, I believe the best way to be adqusinted with the whole Tribe of 'em, wou'd be to get a general Register drawn from all the Perfumers Shop-books in town — Or which is more scandalous, to examine the Chaulks in all the Chair-mens Cellars about the *Pall-mall* ; where each morning the poor fellows sit, looking pensively upon their long scores, shaking their heads and saying — Ah ! how many times have we trotted with such a powder'd Son of a nine Fathers, from the Chocolate-house to the Play, and never yet saw a groat of his Money.

Enter Nickycrack.

Nick. Mr *Vainthroat* you are welcome to Town, you are the only person living that I most wanted a sight on ; I vow and protest you are, upon my honesty.

Sir Bell. I never yet heard a man call his honesty to witness, but he prov'd a damn'd Rogue at bottom. — This fellow has Rascal stampt upon his very countenance.

Vain. Honest *Nickycrack*, thou art come very opportunely — You may at present be assisting to us. *[Aside.]*

Nick. O Lord, in whatever lies in my power, you know, Sir, that you may assure your self of me — Is this your friend, pray Sir ?

Vain. 'Tis Sir *Bellamour Blunt*, Sir : a person highly worth your acquaintance.

Nick. Sir *Bellamour Blunt*, I am yours, with all the integrity, sincerity, and

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and uprightness an honest heart is capable of containing — Pray, Sir, how can I be most serviceable to ye.

Sir Bell. By going about your business, Sir.

Vain. You must pardon this Gentleman's abrupt speaking, 'tis his way *Mr Nicky-crack.*

Nick. Then the Gentleman's way of speaking suits punctually with my way of acting, which is always honest and downright.

Sir Bell. Were I to guess at your actions by your looks, I'd sooner cut out my Tongue, than speak a syllable that should correspond even with your bare conceptions.

Vain. Fie, Sir *Bellamour*, prithee leave this strange moroseness. — Come honest *Nicky-crack*, can't thee advise us to any good Lodgings?

Nick. O dear, Sir, my Sister *Sweeting* here just by, has the best convenience of Lodging and Boarding of any woman in Town — And she, you know, Sir, is a good woman; a woman, tho I say it, of much true Piety and Devotion.

Sir Bell. I'll hold my life on't, she's a Bawd by her Character.

Vain. Why suppose she were, does not a person of that necessary function deserve a more tender expression — As that such a Lady is a most obliging officious Virginity-Broker, Dem me if she ben't the charitablest creature in the Kingdom — Whenever ye design to villify, you must be sure to let it be *tout en Ridicule*, ah, ha, ha. And thus you may modestly be allow'd to to bespatter any body.

Sir Bell. I'd as soon disguise my person to be a base and barbarous Assassin, as I would my thoughts by telling a Lye.

Vain. Prithee what Company is there at your Sister's at present?

Nick. O Lord, Sir, we are never without good Company; there's the fine Widow *Thorsbift*, a vast fortune; and her pretty Country bred innocent Maiden Sister, Mrs. *Minx*.

Vain. Very well, I know 'em.

Nick. And just now Sir *Wealthy Plaiuder* and his beautiful Daughter *Ophelia*, have made an addition to the Family.

Vain. Sir *Wealthy Plaiuder*, and his Daughter *Ophelia*! Do you hear, Sir *Bellamour*; the very persons we came up to Town withal. I am confident you need no farther inducement. — Go *Nicky-crack*, get our Rooms ready, and we'll order our things thither, and follow immediately.

Nick. Sir I shall be proud of obeying your Command.

[Exit Sir Bell. and Vain.]

Enter Captain Bownceby.

Capt. Ha! My Dear, have I found thee? I have been upon the hunt for ye, with greater vigour than ever I yet pursu'd an Enemy; and that

The Pretenders : Or,

you may imagin was never with any small heat. — Come faith you must assist me.

Nick. In what, good Captain *Bowmceby*? What is the mighty business?

Capt. VVhy the mighty business is love — And who the Devil would think a man of my rough temper, a Soul of that fierceness as mine is, should e're be flexible to the beck of a little, puny, blind brat?

Nick. Good Captain, the Object?

Capt. The Object of my uncontrollable passion, is the VVidow *Thoro-shift*: I know you have an interest in her — And let me perish if it shan't be worth thy while.

Nick. Ha! Pimp for a Soldier in time of Peace, ah that's damn'd cool work e'faith.

Capt. Pox! I understand ye. — You shan't want your encouragement, tho I sink my Arrears three parts in four for you.

Nick. Captain, I have business at present: but assure your self you may command me in any thing, so your intentions be just and honourable; for all the world knows that Mr. *Nicky-crack* will not act otherwise than what is becoming an honest man; and as such, I am noble Captain *Bowmceby*'s very humble Servant. — Oh! Yonder's *Nibs*, the trusty Servant-maid, walking this way, she can better inform you in your present concerns. — I am yours, Sir. [Exit.

Enter Nibs.

Capt. Sweet Mrs. *Nibs*, I'll be short and Soldier-like with you. Know then that the suze of my Vitals is fired by the lighted Match of your Mistresses Beauty; and if it be not quickly extinguish'd by her cooling Pump of Pity, dry up my blood, if I shan't be blown into the air; and there burst into millions of fiery atoms.

Nibs. Sir, I'll endeavour to answer you as a Captain ought to be answered: I'll say but little, but what I do say shall be to the purpose. I say, that a Servant that is entrusted with the concerns of a Family, ought always to have Discretion stand Centinel upon her lips, there strictly to guard the port of her utterance. For my part, I scorn to let my tongue, Weather-cock like, wag with the breath of every impertinent enquirer: If I see with one eye, I wink with the other: and whatever I hear, is that very moment barricado'd within the precincts of this Breast: and mum's the word; and tho I say it, that shou'd not say it, and all that —

Capt. Nay prithee *Nibs*, halt, halt, halt I say. — Come, let's to the purpose, I expect very soon to be a Collonel, and I'll give you my parole of honour to make that man a Captain that you shall think fit to make your Husband, deal but sincerely with me, and let me know how things stand?

Nibs.

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Nibs. Well Sir, what is't you wou'd know?

Capt. Why I wou'd know who pays Court to the Widow?

Nibs. O Lord! all the world: Who pays Court to a rich Widow? Why Courtiers without Estates, Country-Gentlemen damnably in debt, unbenefic'd Divines, Officers without Posts, Doctors without Patients, Lawyers without Clients, Tradesmen without Stocks, younger Brothers without either Fortunes or Employs, Beaux upon their last legs, cast Stallions, and beggarly Poets; and there's the greatest part of the world, I'm confident on't.

Capt. Blood and Brimstone, *Nibs*, prithee leave this eternal chattering, and tell me who is my most dangerous Rival.

Nibs. Why then, Sir, as I hope to be a Captains Lady, for once I will divulge—There's one Mr. *Broakage*, a wealthy Merchant, who attacks her vigorously.

Capt. Hell and furies! Bombs and *Bilboa* Blades! May rank Coward be imprinted on this dreadful Countenance, if I don't go raise the Siege instantly—How! A City-drone stand in competition with a daring war-like Hornet? Ha!

Nibs. He's wonderful rich; and you know that's a prevailing accomplishment in the business of Love—He has Colonies in all our Plantations, Cargoes in all our Trading bottoms, and Shares in all our Banks.

Capt. Ha! I'll go this moment and depopulate all his Plantations, sink all his Ships, and blow up all his Banks.

Nibs. Oh brave Captain!

Capt. I'll Carbonade the Dog full of ghastly Wounds, then with my charming Widow in my arms, I'll mount my triumphal Chariot, and drag his mangled Carcass around the utmost limits of the Universe.

Nibs. Well said Captain!

Capt. I'll first go to the Widow, and if I find there be occasion, I'll put this tremendous sentence of mine in execution the very moment afterwards. Parch my puddings if I don't. [Exit.]

Nibs. Ha, ha, ha.

Enter Nicky-crack.

Nick. *Nibs*, what has the Captain deserted?

Nibs. VVhy faith, I have been whetting his Courage, and spurring him in his amour with the V Widow—And you know there's no time to be lost in that business.

Nick. Gad 'tis true, for if we don't dispose of her in less than four and twenty hours, I'm confident the Tallymen will be for dismantling of her—And shou'd every Bird fetch her own Feathers, I doubt the poor Widow *Thoresbift* would be left as bare as *Asop's* Daw—But first I'll to the Commissaries Office, and make some enquiry after this thundering Captain *Bownceby*. *Nibs.*

The Pretenders : Or,

Nibs. Pray do Mr *Nicky-crack*, for as times go now there are near as many that take the names of Captain upon 'em, as there are Soldiers in the Kings Army.

Nick. 'Tis true; for a stiff cockt-up Hat, close twisted Peruke, and a tuckt-in Cravat——

Nibs. A brandy pimpled face, impudent look, and a hoarse voice.—

Nick. A score of new coyn'd Oaths, and half as many drunken Catches——

Nibs. A great brass hilt Sword, and an Oaken Plant with a dirty Ribbon in it——

Nick. A blue pair of Breeches and red Stockings——

Nibs. Are sufficient to gain any man the title of a Captain, tho perhaps he be but a Bayliffs Follower——

Nick. Or the scoundrel Bully to a Widows Coffee-House in a blind Alley.

Nibs. And indeed there's as much occasion that you should go to the *Change* and make some enquiry after Mr *Broakage*, that so we may be ready to snap at that which proves the best bargain.

Nick. That's right again; for 'tis as difficult to guess at the substance of a Merchant by his figure in the world, as 'tis to know the true grief of a young Widow, by the dismal appearance of her mourning Veil.

Nibs. Or at the real intentions of a blushing Virgin, when she sets her mouth in print, and says No to a good proffer——

Nick. Or as it is to know the age of a Beau, without having first consulted the person that shaves his empty Noddle, or his Operator, to be informed, whether this *European* Monster is not obliged to the great *African* one, for the whiteness of his Teeth——

Nibs. Or to know his natural imperfections, unless his Valet de Chambre be workt to a Confession, what suppliments his Beauship makes use of, to correct the deficiencies of his Shape and Complexion.

Nick. Right e'gad, as whether his nice jutting backside be real flesh and blood, or only an artificial Cushion of quilted Cotton——

Nibs. Or whether the calves of those pretty Legs he struts upon, do not owe their original to some ingenious Artists amongst the Stocking-Weavers in *Spittle Fields*.

Nick. Ha! Yonder's the Widow, and my Sister *Sweetny* coming this way from their evenings devotion.

Nibs. A fine trade indeed, Prayer-Books in their hands, and the World, Flesh, and the Devil in their hearts.

Enter Widow Thoroshift, Sweetny, with Books in their hands.

Nick. (*approaching them*) Madam *Thorashift* I am your Servant ——
Sister

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Sister Sweetny I have just recommended to you a couple of new Lodgers; I believe they are by this time got to your house.

Sweet. Pray who are they?

Nick. Why there's Mr *Vainbroat*, a person that we all know, and his friend Sir *Bellamour Blunt*, such a morose piece of Knighthood that I never yet saw; should he chance to go into your Cellar, he'd endanger fowring your Beer, more than all the Thunder of a hot Summer — But no matter for that, he's a man of substance, and that is enough for our purpose.

Sweet. I have heard of him; but is Mr *Vainbroat* come to Town? I vow I am glad on't, for he's a pure man.

Wid. Mr *Vainbroat* indeed is most excellent company amongst the women; he knows all the scandalous news about Town, especially that part of it, that is most necessary for us to know, as when the close-fisted Steward fills his Masters Fob for him, and thinks fit to entrust him with the management of three or four hundred of his own Guineas.

Sweet. Or when the City Merchant, after a lumping bargain by inch of Candle, comes to lavish away a hundred pieces amongst our *Bona Roba's* of *Coven Garden*.

Nick. Or when, an Inns-of-Court Spark confesses a Statute to raise five hundred pounds, upon the reversion of his Fathers Mannor house, to make his last flourish withal — And when that is fairly snacket by Bawds, Pimps, and Strumpets, the vain Coxcomb sneaks over the Water into the bounds of the *Kings Bench*, and there dozes away the remainder of his Life, with fulsome Flip, and nasty Mundungus.

Wid. Nay, he has always pretty stories of the women too.

Sweet. Ay so he has, Madam; and you know 'tis the delight of our Souls to hear others of our own Sex reflected on.

Wid. So it is, Mrs *Sweetny*, Ah, ha, ha, I laugh'd heartily when he told me how my Lady *Rampabout* uses to infuse Opium into her Husbands Tea, and when the good old Knight is fast asleep in his chair of ease by the fire side, the very fairly receives her friendly visits without any danger of a discovery.

Sweet. Ha, ha, ha: And I laugh'd as heartily when he told me of a certain *Fleetstreet* Dame, that had got a Receipt to give her Husband the nasty Northern distemper, by dressing his Shirts with a white Powder, that so she might have a pretence to lye alone, and there entertain the carresses of her lusty long-limb'd fore-man of the Shop.

Omn. Ha, ha, ha.

Sweet. But good lack, alack! how came we to enter into this discourse before we had laid our Prayer-books out of our hands?

Wid. Come, come, as long as there is no body but our selves, 'tis well well enough.

Nick.

Nick. But pray let's leave this chit chat, and mind the main chance :
Madam Threshift you shan't fail to have an account of the true estimate of
 your new Lovers.

Wid. Mr *Nickycrack*, I am wonderfully obliged to you.

Nick. In the first place I will go to my Lord *Courtispoll*, about your
 Sister, *Madam Minx's* concern, by this time I suppose he may be come
 from Court : I'll secure you, I'll bring him along with me.

Wid. Pray do, Sir, and before you urge the business home to his
 Lordship, make him sensible of all the incident charges of a lying-in
 bout.

Nick. Nay faith he's not unsensible of such matters ; for I believe his
 Lordship has paid for fifty lying-in bouts, where he has had no farther
 concern but for the bare credit on't.

Wid. The truth on't is, his politick vanity makes him the most ac-
 complisht Cully in the Kingdom.

Nick. I'll undertake there's never a Crack in Town, if she reports that
 she was first debauch't by my Lord *Courtispoll*, but is sure to receive a
 gratuity from his Lordship, for telling that most obliging lye.

Sweet. 'Tis pity indeed, that his mighty business at Court about State
 affairs would not allow us more of his company.

Nick. He business at Court ! 'tis all pretences, all pretences faith,
 Sister. 'Tis true, he goes every day thither, but has nothing to do
 there, but to walk out of one Room into another, which
 indeed he does with a wonderful deal of politick gravity.
 And as for his being consulted in State affairs, I dare swear his
 opinion was never askt, tho it were only to know the qualifications of
 his neighbour in the Country, who solicited hard at Court to be made
 a Worshipful Justice.

Sweet. Well, 'tis time for me to go, and give a welcome to my new
 guests. Madam, will you please to walk ?

Exeunt Wid. and Sweet.

Enter Prim.

Prim. Mr. *Nickycrack*, my Lord has urgent business with you, and
 would speak with you immediately.

Nick. Mr *Prim*, I was this moment coming to pay my humble De-
 veirs to the most noble Lord *Courtispoll*, and now at his Lordships
 command, I'll fly, I'll fly to his honourable presence.

[Exit.]

Prim. Mrs *Nibs*, I congratulate the chearful ruddiness of your Com-
 plexion, and must own, that I find a fresh spring of joy begin to flourish
 in my Bosom, by the warm influence of your bright shining Eyes —
 Gad that was finely spoke, and very much like a Gentleman. *[Aside.]*

Nibs. Pray, Mr *Prim*, don't exercise your Court flattery upon me.

Prim. Not a syllable of flattery, Gad Dem me — May I forfeit
 the honour of my Family, if I han't a great veneration for you.

Nibs. Your Family ! Pray what Family are you of, Sir ?

Prim.

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Prim. What Family? I am of the ancient Family of the *Prims* of *Prim Castle*, upon *Chivet Hills*, on the Borders of *Scotland*; and would have you to know, tho I serve a Peer of the Realm, yet I'd scorn to serve the best Commoner in the three Kingdoms. Upon the word of a Gentleman you may believe me.

Nibs. Ha, ha, ha, I could tell this pitiful scoundrel another story if I pleas'd — But that I'll reserve to another opportunity — [Aside] Well, Mr *Prim*, I am sorry I cannot stay at present, and pay you the honour that is due to you, and to the ancient Family of the *Prims* of *Prim Castle* — But I shall leave you in good hands; for I see Madam *Minx's* Maid, honest Country *Doll*, coming this way, and so I am worthy Mr *Prims* most obedient. [Exit]

Enter *Doll*.

Prim. Mrs *Dorothy*.

Doll. Mistress *Dorothy*! pray Mistress me no Mistresses; I am plain Country *Doll*.

Prim. Then sweet Country *Doll*, may base ignominy taint the blood of me, if you han't something in your face that looks very charming.

Doll. Charming! what's charming, I never heard such a word in all my breath, nor I.

Prim. Pretty Innocence! — why prithee *Doll*, how do they make love in the Country?

Doll. Why in't Country, if *John* casts a Motion to *Joan*, and *Joan* she likes it, then *Joan* gis *John* 't Sillabub, Then *John* teakes *Joan* to the Alehouse, and gis her Plumb Ceake and Ale, where m'aps ater't first Flagon, *John* slaps *Joan* or't face, then *Joan* she's dugged. But after t'other por or two all is well again; and *Joan* she promises to meet *John* at night upon Measters Hay Mow, where a hunder't to one but *Joan* she proves with Chilt. Then *Joan* she fetches *John* for't the Justice, and Justice ater't hearing whole story, makes *John* marry *Joan*, and there's an end of tat business.

Prim. Ha, ha, ha, very pretty I vow.

Doll. Now pray Measter *Prim*, will yo tell one how yo maken Love in London.

Prim. That I will *Doll* to the best of my power. In the first place, Great men make haughty love with their titles and honours — Elder Brothers just come to their Estates, make raring love, with gaudy Liveries and gilt Coaches — Statesmen and men of business, make solid love with formal shrug and politick grimace. And your Citizens make sordid love, with pauntry Presents from their well-stockt Purfes.

Doll. Good, pray go on.

C

Prim.

Prim. Officers of the Army make thundering love, with Vollies of Oaths and Curses. And the Beaus make as apish and impertinent love with their Combs and Snuff boxes, as the Wits do tiresome and whining love, with their Songs and Elegies.

Doll. So, very well.

Prim. Your cropt-ear'd Prentices make sneaking love, with stealing into *Abigail's* pocket either an Orange stuf't with Cloves, or a good slice of Ginger-bread—Pert dapper Pages, and spruce Valet de Chambres, make teasing love with ruffling off Heads and hawling of Petticoats. In fine, your Bullies, and Troopers, make barbarous love, by knocking down their Dowdies, and enjoying them in a swoond.

Doll. O Gemini gemini, did one ever hear the like on't? —But pray when will yore Lord come and make love again with my Mistress? Poor Soul! he has brought her to a fine pass a my word; she's either longing or puking all the day long, so she is.

Prim. My pretty *Doll*, my Lord won't fail of being with her this evening; and as soon as they are Chamber'd, thee and I will go and solace our selves over a glass of Wine at the Tavern.

Doll. Marry but don yo think that I will trust my self? that would be fine work indeed.

Prim. In token that I'll do nothing but what is becoming a Gentleman, I'll make my dear Rustick Cherub a Present of this Diamond Ring.

Doll. O Lord, O Lord, a Diamond Ring on *Doll's* Finger, how that will look when I goo a into th' Country, to rake ater't Cart or milkKye again.

Prim. It was presented me by a great Courtier, and I hope *Doll* you will accept of it from my hands, as an inviolable pledge of my just and honourable pretensions.

Doll. In troth Measter *Prim*, it shall go hard, but that I'll make you amends some way or other — Ods so, here comes my Mistress.

Enter Minx.

Minx. How now *Doll*, why are you not at home doing what I bad you?

Doll. I was just a goeing forsooth.

Minx. Nay, now stay and go along with me — Mr *Prim* what does my Lord *Courtipo'l* mean, never to see a body again.

Prim. Madam *Minx*, I was coming to acquaint your Ladyship that his Lordship will be with you immediately. I'll assure you Madam, that my Lord languishes with impatience, till he has once more sacrificed his bleeding heart at the shrine of your most illustrious beauty —

Gad

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Gad I shall rival my Lord with pure dint of Eloquence. [*Aside.*]

Minx. Sackerfize and Lusters, I don't know what you mean by such words not I, we are not us'd to such gibberish in the Country — Pray go tell him that my heart is ready to burst for him, that I have almost cry'd my eyes out, that I'll neither eat, drink, nor sleep till I have seen him.

Prim. Madam, upon the unblemish'd fidelity of a Gentleman, I'll punctually deliver your Ladyships commands.

Minx. Well *Doll*, hast thee been playing thy Country part with *Prim*, ha?

Doll. To a hair e'faith, Madam; the Puppy has just given me a Diamond Ring to go with him anon to the Tavern.

Minx. Let me see it. Upon my Soul 'tis right, and 'tis high time for me to look to my hits too, and fix his Lord — — This evening in spite of fate I'll hook him into settlement. What signifies his Lordships paying for Lodging and Diet, and some little nasty Presents of a Gown and Petticoat once a month or so. A musty *Quietus* Judge would give me as much as that comes to, besides the assurance of a Legacy of broad Gold, that the old Toast had palm'd when he sat upon the Bench for perverting of Justice.

Doll. Indeed, Madam, 'tis true, I know a Lady that has three times as much only for scratching the Poll of a Gouty Citizen.

Minx. A woman of pleasure is worse than an *Indian* Slave, that has not a Settlement at her own Command. A Quality Mistress should keep her Coach, a brace of Footmen, and a leash of young Gallants at least.

Doll. Pray, Madam, be rul'd by me, get the writings drawn, according as my Lord has already given you the particulars. And when you have workt up his passion to a glowing pitch, then of a sudden take upon you to be peevishly coy, and don't so much as let him squeeze your hand, till he has first squeez'd the Wax.

Minx. Don't question *Doll*, but I'll manage him as a Cull of the first head ought to be managed.

Doll. Do so, Madam.

Tears mixt with Smiles, won't fail to do the feat;
And Country *Minx* may prove a *London* cheat.

End of the First Act.

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE *A Room in Mrs. Sweetny's House.*

Sir Weal. Plainer, Mrs. Sweetny and Ophelia walking off at some distance.

Sir W. P. **P** Ray Landlady *Sweetny*, let me recommend to your care my Daughter *Ophelia* there—My Daughter, who I may justly say is——

Sweet. Is! *Sir Wealthy Plainer?* she is the mirror of Beauty, the pride of Mankind, the glory of her Sex, and the wonder of the Age; she is——

Oph. Struck with amazing confusion to be thus flatter'd. Oh how odious a creature is a fawning Hypocrite. *[Aside.]*

Sir Weal. I'll say this for *Ophelia*, that she's an excellent Hufwife—— You must know, do you mind, that I have bred her to be——

Oph. A slave to a miserable parent *[Aside.]*

Sir Weal. To be, I say, exquisitely officious in the affairs of the Family. She shall clarify Whey, make Nettle Porridge, and Barley-broth, with ever a Girl in the Kingdom.

Oph. This indeed is a true bill of fare of our late Country Diet. *[Aside.]*

Sir Weal. Now look ye *Mrs Sweetny*, if you can find me out some substantial Tradesman, that will take my Daughter purely for her intrinsic value, and expect nothing with her, I may perhaps be perswaded to part with her.

Oph. Here's a Parents affection; and yet he's every moment thund'ring in my ears filial duty, forsooth. *[Aside.]*

Sir Weal. Well, at present I have some business of consequence to dispatch. I'll therefore leave her with you: but be sure that amongst your many pious instructions, ply her home with the fifth Commandment, descant well upon that I say; so that reverend old age may keep its lawful Sovereignty.

Sweet. O good, Sir, what small Talent I have either in argument or eloquence, shall certainly be employ'd for the service of *Sir Wealthy Plainer*, and for the real good and essential benefit of pretty Madam *Ophelia* here— I'll take care she shall accompany me to my daily Devotions.

Sir Weal.

The Town Unmaskt.

I 3.

Sir Weal. Devorions ! As for Devovions, do you mind me, I do not think 'tis a pin matter. If she asks me blessing, do you see, 'tis enough, 'tis enough in all conscience.

Oph. And that I should go without, were the purchase of it any more than a bare God a mercy?

Sir Weal. Well, mind what I have said, and so, do ye see, fare you well. Da, da, Daughter. [Exit.

Sweet. Come, pretty Madam *Ophelia*, now you and I are together in private, we may take the liberty to open our Souls freely. Dissimulation is a loose upper garment, that may be laid aside at pleasure.

Sir Bellamour appears at a distance.

Oph. Now the old Cockatrice begins to appear in her proper colours. [Aside.

Sweet. You are young, Madam, and consequently must have wishes ; soft, young, tender wishes, which wishes may be satisfied, so it be within the rules of discretion.

Oph. If discretion direct our wishes, I am confident they can never tend to any thing that is vicious — Well, since 'tis not in the power of Mankind to shock my principles, or tarnish my vertue, I'll for once counterfeit a levity, and see what she would be at (*Aside.*) I must confess, Mrs *Sweetmy*, that I do believe the shackles of ignorance to be the greatest burden that can be impos'd upon us Mortals. I am therefore very willing to surrender my self to ye, that I may be better instructed.

Sweet. That's my good Girl, dost thee know what love is, Child ?

Oph. Not very well : But I have heard 'tis something that of a sudden plays and dances about the heart, and from thence gradually trickles along the Veins, till having diffus'd itself into subtle rays, it steals out at the corners of the Eyes to reach the object of desire.

Sweet. Ah, ha, ha, a pretty notion truly of Loves first Onset. But I must tell you, that were Love to do nothing else, than what is perform'd by ineffectual glances — Well, I'll say no more, there are many gay, young, Sparks about the Town. Let opportunity shew ye further — What think you of Mr *Vainthroast* that came up to Town with you ? Ah ! He's a pure man. — Od, so, see where he comes. How do you do, good Mr *Vainthroast*, after your journey ?

Vain. Pretty well, Madam, but methinks I want to divert my self with some of my old hearty Bottle friends.

Sweet. And pray can't you no way divert your self with us that are Women ?

Vain.

Vain. Faith, Madam, not easily ; for generally you that are Women, either affectation makes you troublesome, pride makes you imperious, or an over easiness makes you nauseous.

Oph. Such tempers are often assum'd, Sir, when at so cheap a rate a woman can free herself from some of your impertinent and comcomby addresses.

Sweet. I thought Mr *Vaintbroat* had been better bred, than to express himself in general terms, before particular Company, especially before a Lady every way so deserving, as is Madam *Ophelia* here.

Vain. O Lord, Madam, I am sufficiently acquainted with the bright *Ophelia*'s perfections, to except her from the whole Sex.

Oph. I am sure not a Member of the Sex, ought ever to value what is said by a publick Detractor.

Vain. Detraction ! why 'tis by that alone that I have insinuated myself into the intimate acquaintance of all the Women of Quality about the Town.

Sweet. Come, Mr *Vaintbroat*, you shall atone for your Fault by giving us a Song.

Vain. With all my heart, Madam ; but I wish by that means I do not commit a greater.

S O N G.

T H E Riddle of Nature,
Is a Female Creature ;
She's graciously proud,
Maliciously good,
And her business is to be idle.
The mysterious Toy,
If she weeps 'tis for joy,
And when she beguiles,
'Tis done with her smiles,
He's mad then that bites of the Bridle.

Sweet. O fie upon you, for you're a sad man — Have you seen Madam *Thorsbift* yet, Mr *Vaintbroat*.

Vain. Yes, faith, ha, ha, ha, poor Widow, I pity her e'gad, if she lets that Tenement of hers stand a little longer uninhabited, it will be difficult for the next possessor to make good repairs.

Sweet. I'll promise you, Sir, she does not want applications, but her prudence makes her cautious — Come, shall us walk in-
to

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to the Dining Room, by this time I believe my Lord Courtipoll may be come.

[Exeunt.]

Enter Sir Bellamour Blunt.

Sir Bell. 'Tis done! 'tis done. That heart that till now ne're felt a single thro', is become all over pangs — I must own, that at first sight I thought her beautiful; and what I have now overheard, assures me that her virtue is inestimable. — Oh Ophelia.

Re-enter Ophelia at a distance.

Oph. By hard shift I have slip't the Company of that wicked Seducer. And now I'll retire to my chamber, to enjoy the true pleasure of thinking.

Sir Bell. Bless me! She's here (*starting.*) Madam.

Oph. Sir.

Sir Bell. Do ye discover nothing by my looks?

Oph. Indeed, Sir Bellamour, I always thought you lookt something cynical: And I believe you are now running mad.

Sir Bell. My passion, I must confess, is something furious. Love is a sort of madness.

Oph. The knowledge of your Distemper is half your cure, Sir?

Sir Bell. Will you suffer your pitty to assist in the cure?

Oph. I am not credulous enough to think that you have any occasion for it. — However, I can't stay to discuss the point with you at present.

Sir Bell. Why so? where are you going then?

Oph. I'll soon try his reality. (*aside.*) May you be trusted, Sir?

Sir Bell. Indeed I may, Madam.

Oph. Then know I'm going to my Chamber, to fetch my Mask, Hood and Scarf, and so jaunt it a little.

Sir Bell. Jaunt it! — What's the meaning of that?

Oph. Why that's to take a Hackney Coach, scowr from Playhouse to Playhouse, till I meet with some young Fellow that has power enough to attack me, stock enough to treat and present me, and folly enough to be laugh'd at for his pains.

Sir Bell. Sure that Devils impliment, my Landlady, has not already induc'd her unexperienc'd youth.

[Aside.]

Oph. Have you any thing else to say to me, Sir?

Sir Bell. A great deal, Madam.

Oph. Then when I have nothing else to do, I'll hear you; and so adieu, good loving Sir Bellamour.

[Exit.]

Sir Bell. Well, tho I am not cut out for a soft Lover, I have a resolution that's capable of persevering, And if I mistake not, I do already make plain discoveries through the thin veil of my Mistresses pretences;

tences ; so that till a farther opportunity, I shall rest satisfied that I have a deserving object for my passion, and en trust to her and fate for a suitable success. [Exit.

Enter Captain Bownceby, and Widow Thorosshift.

Wid. Pray Captain, what do you think the world would say on me, should I bestow my self and fortune on a person ———

Capt. Halt, halt good Madam : before you say a word on my person, pray be so kind as to view me well. Do but mind this capacious Breast; these robust Shoulders, the sturdiness of my Chine, the breadth of my Gaskins, the true turn and symmetry of my Limbs, and the length of my Foot.

Wid. Your person I must confess is not despicable, but then, Sir, your station, where you may come to expose your self ———

Capt. Halt, halt again, I say, if I once cope with my Widow, adieu Scarlet E'faith. If ever I spill drop of blood in the Field more, may my Flesh be food for Ravens, and my Bones lie blanching upon a Country Common.

Wid. But then Captain, without an Estate where's an equivalent for my Fortune?

Capt. An equivalent, Madam! Why this person of mine that you have already view'd, is more than equivalent for an Earldom, if inherited by a puny Lanthorn-back'd Chitty-fac'd Stripling.

Wid. Look ye, Captain, I question not but you know that I am address'd to by Mr *Brookage*, a wealthy Merchant; and I have no sooner mentioned him, but see where he comes, for the present Ill leave you together. [Exit.

Capt. Sir?

[Angrily.

Bro. Sir.

Capt. Did you never hear of Captain *Bownceby*?

Bro. I have heard of several Captain *Bowncebys*, Captain *Hacknins*, and Captain *Kick and Cuffs*. And what then, Sir?

Capt. I find this Mungrel has got Beef and Pudding in his paunch, and I believe dare fight (*aside*.) I say, Sir, do you know what Captain *Bownceby* can do if he pleases? (*very loud*)

Bro. I know what the Law will suffer him to do; and if he does more than that ———

Capt. What then, Sir?

Bro. Then, Sir, his big looks may clance to dwindle into a *Tyburn* grin.

Capt. Ay, Sir, ay Sir, 'tis well you have got *Tyburn* on your side, or let me tell you, Mr *Brookage* should not have out-liv'd his last words, scarry my Carcass if he should.

Enter

Enter Nibs.

Nibs. Gentlemen the Widow has over-heard your high words, and sent me to tell you, that if you don't this moment accommodate your differences, and embrace as friends, she'll never see the face of either of you while she breaths again; therefore if you have any value for her, I hope you'll not dispute the executing her Commands.

Capt. Mrs Nibs, the Widow shall be obey'd by Captain Bounceby, and all the Bouncebys in Christendom.

Bro. And by me Benjamin Broakage, and all the Broakages in the Universe.

Capt. Honest Mr Broakage!

Bro. Dear Captain Bounceby!

(They embrace)

Nibs. A couple of Coxcombs!

[Aside.

Capt. You shall for the future command me and all my Weapons, even from my Bagonet to my Back-sword.

Bro. And you my Purse, from the Decus's to the Jacobus's.

Capt. Is it so? Gad then it shan't be long before I borrow Money of him, I'll promise him.

[Aside.

Nibs. Come Gentlemen, what think ye of strengthening your friendship with a Health to the Widow, and so binding your bargain with a Bottle?

Amb. With all my heart, Mrs Nibs.

Nibs. Come along then.

[Exeunt.

Enter Minx and Doll, followed by Sir Wealthy Plainer.

Minx. What the dickings is the matter with ye, to be always thus teasing a body when you come to Town?

Sir Weal. Matter my Minky! Why I love my Minky. Piddy my Minky let me go a little into dy Chamber widdee; wou't a my Minky?

Minx. My Chamber! don't you think I ll let any thing in the shape of Man enter my Chamber doors?

Sir Weal. Odsboblkins let me go in any other shape then: Tye a Collar about my neck and lead me thither in the shape of Towzer, if dow tinkst fit, my Minky. Nay, I'll bedy Puffy-cat, dy Puppy-dog, dy any ting, my little pittty Minky.

Minx. None of these shapes will do indeed, Sir Wealthy.

Sir Weal. Shall I come then, like another Jove, in the shape of—
(Chinks a Purse of Gold) Dost thou hear the blessed chink, hea Girl?

Minx. Alack Sir, you have such winning ways with you.

Sir Weal. I call, and I call, catch Minky; edad there be Purse and all, my Child a grace, there's Gold for thee.—Edad I'm old Sir Wealthy still, tho I've sold my Estate, plead poverty to the world, and have swore my self not worth a groat, on purpose to avoid paying the Kings Taxes.

Minx. A very conscientious Commonwealths-man truly. (aside)

D

Well

Well, Sir, I have bethought of a way take to you into my Chamber unsuspected—*Doll*, go and fetch hither one of your quondam Country Habits, she and I will dress you up, and if my Lord Courtipoll comes, I'll pretend you are my old Nurse just come out of the Country—But be sure, whatever you do, don't ye discover your self, if you do, you'll ruin me for ever.

Sir Weal. E'dad this is a pure contrivance : And never Nurse hugg'd a Bantling, as I'll hug thee for this invention. (*bugs her*) Ah my *Minky*.

Doll. Come, come strip off your Jerkin, and let's dizen you.

(*They dress him up in womens Cloaths.*)

Minx. Hold up your head Gammer, and mump and simper a little.

Sir Weal. Nay I believe I shall not wholly unbecome a womans Dress, for I have features, Chicken ; features, tho I say it, that are not altogether despicable—See, see how I can roll my Eyes about ; and then pout out a plump under-lip, that would make the mouth of a Hermit to water again.

Minx and *Doll*. Ah, ha, ha,

Minx. Now if any body ask you any questions, take your Apron thus, — drop two or three Curtzies, and say, I forsooth, and No forsooth.

Sir Weal. I'll warrant ye, let me alone for I forsooths and No forsooths.

Doll. O Lord Mistress ! does not Measter look just like *Joan* the Ale-wife, at our Church-yard stile ?

Enter Nickycrack, followed by Lord Courtipoll and Prim.

Nick. Madam *Minx*, here's my Lord Courtipoll.

Ld Court. Oh ! my dear Country puggy. (*Embraces Minx.*)

Minx. O my Lord ! why would you stay so long from a body ?

Ld Court. We men of business, my dear Pug, lie under that heavy curse to have our pleasures give way to our toyls. And now I talk of business, let me considera little. (*pauses.*)—If so—Ay, ay, then it must be so—Here *Prim*, disperse my Footmen. Let one wait at the Secretaries Office, another at the Admiralty, and the rest at the Foreign Ministlers, that I may have speedy notice where my assistance is requir'd

[*Exit Prim.*]

Nick. So, under this pretence the Servants are now set at liberty, and each man may go visit his own Pug if he pleases, and so follow the present blessed vocation of their politick Lord and Master. *Aside.*

Ld Court. Who's this you have got with you, Pug ?

Minx. 'Tis my Nurse, my Lord, that is just come out of the Country.

Ld Court. Bless me ! did ever such a sweet Creature as thee art, suck at the breast of such a Horse-fac't Dame as this is ? But hold, I'll go ask her after some affairs in the Country, that may in some measure relate to the State. Let me consider—Good woman, is there store of Acrons this year, ha ?

Nick.

Nick. A notable politick State question truly. [Aside.]

Minx. Nurse, why don't ye answer my Lord? — I find the poor old woman is in a quandery, I believe she never saw a Lord before.

Ld Court. On my Soul that may very well be. — Nay, I my self have known a whole monthly meeting of Country Justices struck so dumb at the grandeur of my presence, that it was scarce within the power of Stale Beer to set their Tongues a moving again. — But come what say ye, old Mrs Chue cud, are Acrons plenty or not, ha?

Minx. Nurse, why don't ye answer, my Lord.

Sir Weal. Yes, forsooth.

Ld Court. Then we may expect our Venison to be fat, if my Dog of a Keeper have the grace to keep the Parish Hogs out of the Park. — But hold, let me consider — Now for some Domestick Intelligence: Is the Widow your Sister marry'd yet? ha, Pug?

Minx. She's not sped yet, but o'restockt with Suitors, as we sen in the Country.

Ld Court. Pretty Pug, thy Country language does become thee. But hold, let me consider once again — I profess there ought to be a Statute of Restriction relating to the Widows of this Kingdom; they are generally so damn'd cunning in their Amours, that half a score of Widows are sufficient to enslave all the young fellows about the Town.

Nick. Ah, my Lord, the young fellows about the Town are not so easily enslav'd in this age of Liberty. Enter Sweetny and Ophelia.

Sweet. O my Lord Courtipoll, I can't but with Reverence acknowledge the high honour your Lordship does my house, in letting its mean roof shadow a person of so much worth, goodness and wisdom, as is the Lord Courtipoll.

Ld Court. Oh Mrs. Sweetny, you are always so lavish in your expressions! — Ha! Bless me! I'm Planet-struck — Never was an Astrologer more amaz'd at the discovery of a new Star, than I am at the sight of that beautiful creature — Pray, Mrs. Sweetny, by what name and title must I salute this fair Angel?

Sweet. 'Tis the beautiful Madam Ophelia, my Lord, Daughter to Sir Wealthy Plainder. (Lord Courtipoll stands musing.)

Nick. So, my Lord I find is embarking himself for another piece of Gallantry. — His politick Lordship falls as naturally into new amours, as a Town Bully runs himself into fresh Reaccounters. — Minx, Minx, ply thy stumps, or'all is lost, faith girl.

Minx. My Lord, my Lord, you forget to bring your Pug the Lapdog you promis'd her, so you do. — (Runs to Sir Wealthy) Either take your Daughter away this moment, or never expect to see the face of me again — (Runs back to Lord Court.) Come, my Lord, will you go along with your Pug, and see how far I have workt upon the Petticoat I shew'd you, when you were here last. — Why don't ye speak to your Pug?

The Pretenders : Or,

Ld Court. I profess I was within my self deciding an intricate State question, and find it must be so.

Sir Weal. (*aside to Ophelia.*) Hussy I command you to retire. I say be gone instantly.

Ophel. What wou'd this dry chopp'd Hag have? — Pray good woman don't you nose me at this rate.

Sir Weal. Ye young Baggage don't ye know me?

Ophel. I'm resolv'd I won't know him at present (*aside.*) What means this sawcy quean to blow her filthy breath in my face, ha?

Sir Weal. Ye young Jade you, I'm your Father: But if ye discover me look to't.

Ophel. Alas the poor woman is beside her senses I find.

Sir Weal. Hussy I'll thump your Jacket for this. I cou'd find in my heart to tear ye in pieces.

Grins and clenches his fists at her.

Ophel. Here, pray let somebody lay hold on this Mad woman, she talks of tearing me in pieces.

Nick. lays hold on Sir Weal.

Ld Court. What's the matter, what's the matter with the Nurse, ha?

Minx. Alas, alas! the poor Nurse is sometimes troubled with fits, and I fear she's now fallen into one.

Sweet. Hold her down, hold her down Brother Nicky-crack; and Doll do you run and fetch the Bottle of Spirit of Harts-horn, run quickly.

Doll runs and brings a Bottle.

Nick. O pox! I find the Nurse proves to be the old Fornicator Sir Wealthy Plainer. (*aside.*) So so, I find she beginsto recover. — Come, now let me alone with her, I'll take her, and give her a turn or two in the Air, and a dram of *Aqua Mirabilis*, which is the life of an old woman, and I'll warrant ye all will be well again.

Exeunt Nick. and Doll leading out Sir Weal.

Oph. I must go see however, that they don't carry the business too far, as bad as he is.

[Exit.]

Ld Court. What has this new-born Star left our Hemisphere already, ha?

Minx. Go, go my Lord, I find you don't love your Pug, that ye don't; if you did, you would never have stood and stared upon a strange face at that rate, indeed you wou'dn't.

Ld Court. Not love my Pug? By the Soul of *Matchiavel* but I do, and that's the greatest oath a Statesman can swear by — VVere I, my Dear, to gaze upon crowds of Angels, and should my Pug be amongst them, she alone should have the last and fixing look.

Sweet. There's a kind Lord for ye. Come, my Lord, by this time I suppose Supper waits for your Lordship.

Ld Court. Come along then. — And after that I and my charming Pug here,

In am'rous sports will so Divinely toy,

“The God of Love shall clap his wings for joy.”

End of the Second Act.

ACT

ACT III.

Scene continues a Room in Sweetny's House

Sir VVealthy Plainder and Nicky-crack.

Sir Weal. **A**H Mr *Nicky-crack*, is it not a hard case for me that am but a poor Commoner, thus to be rivall'd by a Lord.

Nick. Lord, Sir *Wealthy Plainder*, why would ye not discover your self and concerns to me? — All the world knows the sincerity of honest *Nicky-crack*.

Sir Weal. Alas, alas! in this case there can be no remedy but patience. Now must I forsooth e'en draw in my Horns, sneak off and dance Attendance, tho' I am sure to enter into a Steel course to cure my self of the Spleen for't.

Nick. Come, Sir *Wealthy*, do but open your self freely, and I'll engage to assist ye.

Sir VVeal. Open my self, I that I will with all my heart, and my Purse too, I'll promise ye — I am not that indigent person I pretend my self, but am as rich in reality as a Chymist is in fancy — There, *Nicky-crack*, take this as an earnest of my future intentions. *(gives money.)*

Nick. O Lord, Sir, I am now linkt to your service by the very tie of gratitude: and so to the point, Sir; I very well know your affections for Mrs *Minx*, and have already thought of an Expedient, that if you be but consenting, shall soon put ye in quiet possession of the charming Fair.

Sir Weal. Ah my dear Boy, propose it, propose it I say, and never doubt my consent.

Nick. The business is this, I perceiv'd my Lord *Courtispoll* fix'd his eye upon your Daughter *Ophelia*, and then he lickt his Lips, bit his Thumbs, sigh'd, and press'd his sides with his Arms thus.

Sir Weal. Very good.

Nick. Now, Sir, if you be but consenting, that we shall endeavour to work up her inclinations.

Sir Weal. Inclinations! 'Sbud, I say she shall have inclinations if that be all. I'll undertake to enjoyn it by force of power paternal.

Nick. A special Father e'faith

Sir Weal. VVorkt up quoth a! E'gad in this case she shall be workt up, and workt down too, I'll promise her that.

Aside.

Nick.

Nick. Not so fierce, pray Sir, women are of a perverse and refractory temper, and their wills must by gentle and insinuating means be suppl'd into a compliance, and not rashly forc'd by violence. This I'll do, I'll first go and engage my Sister *Sweetmy* on our side, and don't ye doubt the effects.

Sir Weal. Prithee do, my dear Boy, about it this morrent I beg thee (*smuggles him*) So, now begone, Sirrah. (*Exit. Nick.*) I can but think what a happy thing it was, that I had a pretty Daughter to help me out at this dead lift—VVell, I find Children may one time or other be worth their rearing.

Enter Sir Bellamour Blunt and Vainthroat.

Vain. Ha, ha, ha, *Sir Bellamour* in love, pleasant enough e'faith : why an amour, man, will sit as awkwardly upon thee, as a good suit of Cloaths does upon an uncouth Country Squire—But tee yonder's your Father-in-law that is to be.

Sir Bell. Rot him, he's a Brute.

Vain. However, you must be civil to him on the account of *Opbelia*—Your Servant, *Sir Wealthy*, how goes it with our fellow Traveller ?

Sir Weal. How can it go well with any Gentleman that is decay'd in his Fortunes, and as it were turned loose into the world, especially such a base degenerated world as this is ?

Vain. Faith I believe the world is as it used to be.

Sir Bell. I am of your opinion, the rich dread disasters, and the poor condemn 'em. Fools wonder at what wise men foresaw.—And potent Knavery depresses and preys upon meritorious honesty ; and so it was always, I believe.

Vain. As for the female part of the world, I'm sure it is as it should be.

Sir Weal. How is that, pray Sir ?

Vain. Why the dear charming Creatures are so coming, that there's not one in fifty but Cuckolds her Husband before she has him—As thus Sir, when once a young couple have entertain'd a correspondence, and that correspondence ripens into warm desires, and those desires require fruition, then she immediately, for the security of Reputation, marries another, on purpose to give her Spark an opportunity to reap the Blessings freely—And that's Cuckoldom before Marriage for ye, at least it's so intentionally.

Sir Bell. And pray Sir why could not the Lovers themselves have marry'd ?

Vain. O Pox ! that were the way to have had the joys pall'd upon their hands immediately. Marriage joys, foh !

Sir Bell. *Vainthroat* thou'rt a horrible censorious fellow ; and abundantly too general in thy reflections relating to the fair Sex. *Sir Wealthy* *Plainder*, if you please, a word with you.

Sir Weal. Your pleasure, Sir.

Sir

Sir Bell. You have a Daughter, Sir.

Sir Weal. I have so: And 'tis well I have, as the case stands, I can tell you that Sir.

Sir Bell. I must tell you, I think her extremely Beautiful.

Sir Weal. So much the better for my purpose still, Sir.

Sir Bell. In short, I love her.

Sir Weal. And to be as short as you, you are not like to have her, nor have I any thing to give her, Sir.

Sir Bell. My affections are above a bargain.

Sir Weal. And below the mark, I'll tell ye that.

Sir Bell. How so, Sir, I hope our qualities are equal.

Sir Weal. In short, I have engag'd her to a person above your quality.

Sir Bell. Who's that, pray Sir?

Sir Weal. Why then to be plain with you, 'tis to my Lord Courtipoll.

Sir Bell. Lord Courtipoll! why he's married.

Sir Weal. Married! What then, ha, ha, ha, mayn't he have occasion for my Daughter for all that? Ha, ha, ha, married, that's a good one e'faith.

Sir Bell. What does the old Rogue mean, would he prostitute his own Daughter? (Aside.)

Sir Weal. Sir, I must beg your pardon, for I am this moment going to see them fairly put together: and so your servant. Exit.

Sir Bell. Oh horrid Monster! however, I don't question but the young Ladies Virtue will stand the shock, and baffle the intentions of this villain, and so render herself the most adorable Creature upon the face of the Earth.

Enter Nibs.

Sir Bell. Mrs Nibs, you seem to have discretion, and I believe you may be confided in.

Nibs. Sir, I'll endeavour to merit your good opinion, by any service you shall please to command me——In the first place you may be assur'd of my secrecy.

Sir Bell. Pray Sweet-heart accept of this small token, [Gives money] I doubt not but that you are acquainted with the affairs of the Family.

Nibs. That I am, Sir; there is nothing that is done, said, or scarce thought of under this Roof, that is unknown to your very humble Servant Nibs Trusty.

Sir Bell. Then, Mrs Nibs Trusty, I need not tell ye that there are at present base things in agitation.

Nibs. I know what you mean, tho I will say but little. Madam Ophelia is to be sacrificed to the pleasures of my Lord Courtipoll, to gratify her old doting Fathers passion for Mrs Minx, his Lordships present kept Mistrefs.

Sir Bell. I find your intelligence is authentick.

Nibs.

Nibs. I am not unacquainted neither with your pretensions to the beautiful *Ophelia* — What is it now you'd have me do?

Sir Bell. Only to give me a punctual notice of proceedings.

Nibs. I'll do it on the forfeiture of my life. And more than that, I'll assist ye to countermince any Plots that shall be laid against the young Lady's Honour — You seem to be a man of worth, and I have found ye a person of Generosity, therefore assure your self that in your affairs I'll be as diligent as a Court-Procureur, and as secret as a Mother Midnight. This moment I'll see how things go on : and so I am *Sir Bellamour's* most humble Servant.

Exit.

Sir Bell. But come, prithee *Vainthroat* give me some account of this Lord *Courtipoll*, and look you deal sincerely.

Vain. Ha, ha, What, Knight, art stung already with that pestiferous Viper Jealousie?

Sir Bell. I'm not distrustful, but cautious.

Vain. Why then, Sir, upon my word my Lord *Courtipoll* is a dangerous Rival, Folly and Profuseness are taking qualities among the Ladies. And faith they are i'th' right on't ; for how can a Woman better secure her pleasures, than when she commands the Purse of a liberal Fool?

Sir Bell. For my part, I shan't think him dangerous ; for I'm confident *Ophelia* has Discretion enough to laugh at his Folly, and a sufficient stock of Virtue to despise the baleness of his Bribes.

Vain. Come, Sir Knight, that you may shake off this moody amorous temper, I'll entertain you with a Song and Dance.

1.

L Et never dull sorrow our joys invade,
But for ever let's follow the topping trade :
Let a merry merry Song
Drive the Current of Time along ;
He's a Prince of a Man
That doubles his Span,
And makes it a Cubit long.

2.

Call Harry to fetch us more Bottles in,
Don't tarry, since to Revel we thus begin :
Let's tippie tippie on,
Till the Moon and Stars are gone ;
'Tis a meeting divine,
When our faces so shine,
That they Rival the Rising Sun.

A Dance.

Vain.

Vain. So, very well — To morrow you shall range the Town along with me : A Wench and a Bottle is a certain Antidote against the poison of Love : But for the present let's go and divert our selves with the follies that this Family of ours can afford us. *Exeunt.*

Enter Captain Bounceby Drunk. (A Table with Candles)

Capt. Toll, doll, di, da, doll. *(Roars out of Tune.)* Huzzah, Victoria, Victoria ! Ha, ha, ha ; He drink with me, a peddling Prig, 'sbud I've laid him as dead as a Door-nail. And now for the Widow, By the Soul of a Culverin, I cou'd in this humour make Love like a Dragon — Come, faith I'll go practice a little. Here shall stand the Widow, *(Sets a Chair out)* and here shall stand the Whelp *Brookage*, sneaking up in this corner ; *(Sets his Perrywig upon his Cane in the corner)* stand there, you Hell-hound : and if you dare but to look towards me, during the Adoration I shall pay my Charming Goddess here, I'll that moment tear out of your head those Sacrilegious Eye-Balls — Now I'll begin ; Madam, tho I've long been a Man of Terror, and have made Conflagrations, Plundering, Rapes, and Throat-cutting my sport and diversion, yet for the sake of your dear self, I'll now, like a second *Hercules*, sling by my Club and take up the Distaff — The roaring Lion shall clap his Tail betwixt his Legs, and become a fawning Spaniel to lick the dust off your Ladyships Shooe-soles — But first, Madam, let me beg leave to sacrifice yonders snivelling Whorebird, up in the corner there, to my own vengeance, and for your Ladyships honour. *(Draws his Sword, and goes to the Cane and Perrywig)* Come along then ; by the fiery breath of a Demi-Cannon, I'll murder this Whelp and Bacon this very minute, that I will, you Villain, ye Mongril, you Lick-spit Cur ye. *(Lays about him with his Sword)* I'll mince your flesh for ye, and so feed young Jackdaws with the morsels — So, so, now I think 'twill be convenient to repose my self a little after this plaguy fatigue. *(Sheathes his Sword, sits down in the Chair, and falls asleep.)*

Enter Nickycrack and Nibs.

Nick. Nibs, Nibs, what's the matter with the Captain here, he is fallen fast asleep.

Nibs. Why I left him and Mr *Brookage* in the Buttery, drinking the Widows health upon a reconciliation, and I find they have made one another drunk.

Nick. E'gad lets play him some trick or other, and try to startle this undaunted Hero.

Nibs. With all my heart. VVe will take out the Candles, and get the Trumpets my Lord *Courtpoll* has brought to rattle him awake of a sudden, and see how he'll bear it.

Nick and Nibs take out the Candle, Trumpets sounds a Charge.

Capt. *(Starting up)* Good Lord where am I, or what is become of me. *(Re-enter Nickycrack with a Candle)* Ah ! good dear Sir, tell me where I am, or what is become of me.

E

Nick

Nick. 'Tis I, Captain *Bonnelly*, 'tis I, your friend *Nicky-crack*.

Capt. Then I find I have been dreaming all this while.

Nick. But why this cold sweat? why all this fear, good Captain?

Capt. VVhy would ye have a man have courage in his sleep, that is a jest indeed. Now I am awake, Mr *Nicky-crack*, I must tell you, that there is nothing upon the face of the earth, that can terrify Captain *Bonnelly*; nay, I defy the King of Terrors himself, and all his Hell-born Guard de Corps. But hark ye, dear *Nicky-crack*, prethee tell me how dost think my affairs stand with the VVidow?

Nick. On my Soul, as you can wish your self. Ah Captain! I have heard her speak very feelingly of that graceful person of yours.

Capt. Very like so I vow, for I took care to make her view me distinctly. And what if I take an opportunity to palm the true dimensions upon her? ha, Boy.

Nick. Now's your time to bear up briskly: Your Rival Mr *Breakage* is dead drunk in the Buttery; and I'll contrive to secure him for one hour at the least, don't question it.

Capt. Egad then I'll go strike her home. I'll first go wash and tal-low, and then—Have at thy Coat, old VVidow. (*Sings & Dances.*)

Nick. But Captain, methinks you're something forgetful of your faithful servant, Mr *Nicky-crack*.

Capt. Not at all, I protest Sir. Ods life man, the Arrears are not yet paid, when they come in thou shalt swim in Money: by the banel of a Blunderbuss thou shalt, my Boy.

Nick. But Sir, if you please, in the mean time to sign this small Note, it will encourage the work strangely.

Capt. That I will my Lad, I'll sign it as freely as ever I sign'd a false Muster-Roll. Let me see it. (*Signs the Note.*)

Nick. So, Sir, now away to the Widow, and Heavens prosper ye; in the meantime I'll take care of Mr *Breakage*.

Capt. Then faith I'll lose no time — Adieu.

Exit.

Enter Nibs.

Nick. Well *Nibs*, I have got the Captain in black and white here; and now I'll go try to get the Merchant under the same circumstances.

Nibs. I have been examining the Merchants Cargo for him.

Nick. Well! and how, was he richly laden?

Nibs. Hang him, I'll be far enough if he is not a Bankrupt, he had not one souse of Ready in's pocket.

Nick. What Bills had he Child?

Nibs. Bills he had indeed, of Tylour, Surgeon, Landlady, Cook, and Landress, but not one single Bill of Credit.

Nick. The less favour he is like to find at my hands: I'll promise him. Come, let's go order matters to the best advantage.

Exeunt.

Enter

Enter Ld Courtipoll following Ophelia. A Table and Chairs.

Ld Court. Hold! let me consider: what shall I say first? — Oh now I have it. Do you know who I am, Madam, ha?

Oph. 'Tis in vain to be in earnest with this politick Blockhead. I'll en play upon the fool to make my self diversion. (*aside*) — You, Sir, are a person of noble quality.

Ld Court. Right, Madam, I am so. — And pray, Madam, how came you to know that I was a man of noble quality, ha?

Oph. Your mein and person bespoke you so, my Lord.

Ld Court. Very like so, I vow — Gad I'll try her parts a little farther, (*aside*) And do you know what I am famous for?

Oph. No doubt, for your wisdom, my Lord.

Ld Court. Ay, say ye so? — Why should you think so, pray, ha?

Oph. By the solemn air of your countenance, my Lord.

Ld Court. By the soul of *Marchiavel*, she's a meer Sybil, (*aside*) What then do you think me most fit for; ha, Madam?

Oph. To sit at the Helm of Government, and steer the State, my Lord.

Ld Court. O bless me! I vow Madam you're a person of the clearest apprehension that ever I yet conversed withal. Should I have a Son by you, I'd forfeit my honour if he did not bid fair for the Crown of *Poland*, should there chance to be an Election by the time he came of age. But now to the business in hand: Come, pray let's sit down, and I will make love to you as becomes a Statesman, by asking of some politick questions. (*They sit down, my Lord pauses a while*) — Ay that will do. Pray, Madam, which side do you lie on when you settle your self to sleep? ha, Madam.

Oph. What can the *Concomb* mean by this? however, at the present, I'm resolved to humour him. (*aside*) — I always sleep on my left side, my Lord.

Ld Court. Then I am the happiest man in the world, I find the Heavens are propitious to our Amours; for you must know I always sleep on my right, so that I, each night elapse within thy circling arms, shall coo, pur, and murmur out my love with the greatest transports imaginable.

Oph. This I must confess, was a rapture, worthy a Politician. (*aside*)

Ld Court. But hold, let me consider once again! — Ay, if so, then that may very well be.

Oph. Ha, ha, ha, if this be politick Love, it is a very cool way of proceeding.

Enter Minx struggling with Sir Wealthy Plainder, and boxing him.

Minx. Hold out of the way, you old doting fool ye.

Sir weal. Ods life! like this he has made my ears ring again; what a plaguy strength did the young vixen strike withal.

Minx. So so, is this going to see a Packet opened? You a person of quality, and tell a lie.

Ld Court. You mistake, Pug, a Statesman can't tell a lie, he only gives out false intelligence to amuse and gain advantage.

Minx. A fig for a Statesman, don't tell me of a Statesman, ne're a Statesman in Christendom shall abuse me. Don you think to leave me in this condition, without providing either for me or my burthen here. By jenkins before I will be serv'd so, I'll take up the Fire-fork and crack the very skull of you, so I will.

Ld Court. Patience, patience, Pug—E'gad I'll comply, for it may be a fatal thing for a Politician to receive a very small blow, if it chance to hit in the right place.

Minx. Come, come away, will you? The Lawyer waits for you, will you go in and seal the Writings, or no?

Ld Court. That I will, my Pug, I never designed otherwise.

Minx. Come along then. Come, Sir *Wealthy*, you shall go and be witness.

Sir Weal. With all my heart, Madam; o'ds life, if his Lordship delivers I'll take possession e'faith. [*Ex. Ld Court. Minx. and Sir Weal.*]

Enter Nibs.

Nibs. I guess, Madam, at your uneasiness, and therefore soon contrived your relief.

Opb. And I guess who employ'd ye, and therefore shall take care to keep you in the dark. *Aside.*

Nibs. Did not you find his Lordship very troublesome and impertinent?

Opb. Not at all. How can a person of his quality be thought troublesome, or a man of his parts be reckoned impertinent.

Nibs. I scarce believe you to be serious. I know you, Madam *Opelia*, to have a better judgment; but there is a person in the world, tho' I'll say nothing of him, who has no small esteem for you, and is really a man of parts; an honest Gentleman, whose pretensions are honourable: what think you of Sir *Bellamour Blunt*, Madam?

Opb. I think he is a Hog, a mere Hog; who do you think would be troubled with his moroseness?

Nibs. It is his true notion of things, and the sincerity of his principles that makes him so downright, both in his discourse and actions: but here he comes, let him speak for himself.

Enter Sir Bellamour Blunt.

Sir Bell. Are you now at leisure to hear me, Madam?

Opb. No, nor never will be at leisure to hear any body but my Lord

Conversipoli. Well Sir, if you have any business at Court, I may perhaps prevail with my Lord *Conversipoli* to intercede for you.

Sir Bell. Thank my Stars, my business there is equal to his interest, which—

Opb. Hold, no reflections upon a noble Courtier, pray Sir? They ought to be above censure.

Sir

Sir Bell. Nay his Lordship may be a great Courtier as far as I know. Gay fools often serve for the ornamental furniture of a Court — Tho this is not my business at present. Now I have an opportunity I must tell you, that I have a strong and sincere passion for you.

Opb. Passion! Ha, ha, ha. And I must tell you that I have a strong and sincere aversion to all manner of passion, especially a foolish love-passion. 'Tis a turbulent storm of the mind, that raises a short blustering disorder, but soon, alas, flags into a cool regardless calm.

Sir Bell. Mine, Madam, is of a temperament that promises duration.

Opb. Many things that are very promising, meet with strange alterations before their events.

Sir Bell. Have you had any account of this Lord Courtipoll?

Ld. Cour. Yes, yes, he has kept a Mistress, and what by that? we're not to expect Saints about the Town in this Age — The very bulchin Country Calf, that till the age of one and twenty sucks the Teat, and bleats at the heels of his Lady Dam, soon finds an opportunity to lick the face of some homely Heifer or other.

Sir Bell. Do ye know that he's Marry'd, and what function you are design'd for?

Opb. The thoughts of this, I must confess, in spite of my pretensions, shocks the very soul of me, and fires me all over with Indignation. *(Aside.)* Enter Sir Wealthy Plainer.

Sir Weal. O fie, O fie, come along with me, Hussy, quickly.

Nibs. Sir, Sir, your Perriwig is a fire, your Perriwig's a fire, I say.

Sir Weal. Where, where? *(As he flings off his Hat and Perriwig, rubs his Head, and jumps about, Ophelia steals off another way.)*

Nibs. 'Tis out now, Sir: And all's well again.

Sir Weal. *(looking about.)* Where's Ophelia?

Nibs. She's step'd in before you, Sir.

Sir Weal. Edad then I'll after her. *Exit.*

Sir Bell. Was there ever such a barbarous horrid fellow, as this Sir Wealthy?

Nibs. Come, Sir Bellamour, all will go well, I'll warrant you. I can see as far into a Millstone as another body: and can foretell the success of an Amour better than e're a Fortune-teller in the Kingdom. Tho I love to say but little, I don't question but I shall bring all things about, and give you the possession of both the Lady and a considerable Fortune into the bargain, out of her Fathers conceal'd Treasure. For tho I never do discover Secrets, yet I must tell you, that, for all Sir Wealthy pleads poverty at this rate, yet the old Rogue is as rich as a Jew. You shan't want my assistance I promise ye, Sir Bellamour. But mum's the word, not one syllable more. And for your comfort,

At Games of Love, where Lovers tug most hard,

'Tis trusty Nibs that proves the surest Card.

End of the Third Act.

ACT

A C T IV.

Scene continues a Room in Mrs. Sweetny's House.

Widow Thorosnift and Sweetny.

Sweet. **W**ELL, and pray Madam what proceedings is there in your grand affair of Love?

Wid. Indeed Mrs. *Sweetny* I'm at last drove to take my choice of two Extreams, either to be stript, and flung into durance, by the force of Law Temporal, or to be divested of all freedom, and deliver my self into Matrimonial bonds, by the power of Law Spiritual.

Sweet. If you'll be advis'd by me accept of the latter, for in that the tie is mutual; And your knowledge of the world will direct you to loose your own hands at pleasure.

Wid. Then as to my choice of persons, whether I shall take that palpable Fool of a Captain, or the shrewd suspected Knave of a Merchant.

Sweet. Where there is a plentiful Estate a Fool may be very convenient. But in your circumstances the Merchant, that, no doubt, is well acquainted with all manner of subtle Tricking, would, I think, be the fitter Match.

Wid. They have both my promise to dispatch the business this very night, and they equally confide in't.

Sweet. I must tell you, dear Madam, that I look upon both of 'em of very uncertain worth. I wish you wou'd take Courage, prune, bristle, and display your Charms so, that you might entangle the affections of honest Sir *Bellamour Blunt*; he's a man of a known value.

Wid. Alas his gruffship is already visibly fasten'd: Don't you see how he flounces about after the rail of your new guest *Opbelia*?

Sweet. Here comes his friend *Vainthroat*, we'll engage him in the business?

Enter Vainthroat.

Sweet. Where have you been, good Mr *Vainthroat*, we have wanted you strangely.

Vain. Why faith, Madam, I have been, like an out-lying Deer, browsing about a little in fresh pasture, and am now very coolly return'd within the pale again.

Sweet. Come, Sweet Sir, what think ye of promoting a Match betwixt the Widow here, and your friend Sir *Bellamour*. *Vain,*

Vain. Ha, ha, ha, promote do ye call it? I think there is not three pence difference in the piece of service, either to promote a friend six Rounds up an Execution-Ladder, or as many steps towards Matrimony.

Sir Bellamour Blunt appears at a distance, walking in a melancholy posture.

Vain. sings in a Ballad tone.

But see where walks the doughty Knight,

Who all in doleful guise,

Mets out the time of sable night.

With Tears drops from his Eyes.

Widow, Widow, I vow yonders Champion seems to lye under some dire Enchantment, prithee go try whether you have ever a Spell about you that's powerful enough to set him at liberty.

Wid. I'll use my endeavour to unshackle him: But it shall be with design to secure him within a Circle of my own. I promise him a thar. *Aside.*

Sweet. Come, sweet Madam *Thoro'stiff*, you shall shew a Female prowess in attacking this sower Knight of the Lees. I'll conduct you into the Lists, and leave you to manage the Combat as you see convenient. *(Sweetny and Widow walk up towards Sir Bellamour.)*

I hope honest Sir *Bellamour* won't think much to be left alone with a handsome young Widow. Pray let me enjoy you that Love be the subject of your discourse, and look that you handle the matter warmly — Come Mr. *Vainbroat* let's leave them together.

Exeunt Sweet. and Vain.

Wid. But do ye think, Sir, there's no Charms in the world that equals *Ophelia's*? To my knowledge there's a certain person, that, without offence, for Features, for Complexion, for Shape, for Air, for Mien; nay more, one that knows how to —

Sir Bell. Render herself Ridiculous, by a nauseous, false commendation.

Wid. Come, come, a Woman of Discretion, and of a kind, complying temper, as I know who is, will bear with any thing that comes from Sir *Bellamour Blunt*. — Will you suffer —

Sir Bell. The Rack rather than this Impertinence — What the Devil wou'd this woman have?

Wid. Have you to recollect your self, and consult your Reason. Dobut think how mean a spirited thing 'tis, not to resent the slights and affronts of a young wanton Coquet; and how ungenerous 'twou'd be, not to caress the sincere and obliging offers of a person —

Sir Bell. Who in Confidence epitomizes her whole Sex.

Wid. How, Confidence! I find you are one of those tame fools that love to be ill us'd. And since you thus basely refuse my kind and tender

tender Compassion for you, I'll make you smart under the lash of my Vengeance.

Sir Bell. As long as I'm got clear of your Smiles, I'll stand the Battery of your Frowns at a distance. And so faith Lady I shall take my advantage, and sheer off. *Exit.*

Wid. Was there ever any thing so provoking? A dull insensible Log: Efaith I'll plague him for this, I'll warrant him.

Enter Nibs running.

Nibs. Ah Madam, Madam, we're all undone, undone; yonders the Mob up in the City, ravishing at such a rate, you never heard the like on t. They say there is not a Female left undecid'd twixt *Algate* and *Ludgate*.

Wid. Then for my part, I believe the worshipful the Mob have but left them as they found them.

Nibs. O Lord, O Lord! why what, Madam, do ye offer to make a jest of Ravishing?

Wid. Why it always was a jest, a meer jest, *Nibs.* I never yet saw it only represented on the Stage, but it created a satisfactory tittling amongst all the Females in the house.

Nibs. I have told my Lord *Courtipoll* of it, and he's going up into the City with all the haste imaginable.

Enter Lord Courtipoll and Prim.

Ld Court. Come, now I'll shew the world how serviceable I can be to a State upon an emergent occasion.

Nibs. O good my Lord make haste, to be ravish'd by a parcel of nasty Kennel-rakers would be insufferable, were it to be by Gentlemen it were nothing.

Prim. Alas, poor thing.

Wid. But what my Lord, do ye mean to *Drawcancer* it, and singly encounter Multitudes?

Ld Court. No, no, Madam, I'll promise you I don't mean to strike a stroke, I know better things. In the first place I'll make Speeches. Thus I'll begin: *My loving Friends and dear Countrymen.* As for the rest I may trust my genius to direct that happy Talent I have in Oratory. Madam, your Servant. But hold! E're I go, pray Mrs *Nibs* do you take this Ring, and whilst 'tis warm with these three kisses, present it to the fair *Opelia*, and let her put it on her middle finger on her left hand. And having also solemnly kiss it three times, let her lay it close to her heart, and then put up some ejaculations for her adventurous Lord *Courtipoll*. Such mysteries as these were always thought requisite amongst the ancient Politicians, upon the undertaking of any grand affair. Madam, your Servant. Come along *Prim.*

Exeunt Ld Courtipoll and Prim

Wid.

Wid. Nibs, what have you done with my brace of Lovers, I am resolv'd I'll soon decide the point in controversy. But first I'll to my Chamber, to meditate Revenge upon this base fellow Sir *Bellamour*, to slight proffer'd Caresses is an injury that a woman is never able to forgive.

Exit.

Nibs. And I shall take care to blunt the edge of your malice on this occasion, I'll promise you. *Enter Nicky-crack.*

Nick. Ha, ha, ha, yonder's my Lord marcht up into the City to quell the Möb, forsooth.

Nibs. Han't I manag'd this project rarely? I have sent his Lordship on this fools errand, so that my generous friend Sir *Bellamour* might have the greater freedom to prosecute his Amour with *Opelia*.

Nick. Faith 'twas well contriv'd, and I'll assist thee in any thing with all my heart, Girl.

Nibs. Come along then.

Exeunt.

Enter Minx and Doll:

Minx. Now *Doll* I am a little at ease; my Settlement is not only a sufficient maintenance for my self, but for any Spark that I shall best fancy; so that I may now when I think fit, turn honest with a safe Conscience.

Doll. And your humble Servant Country *Doll* here is jumping into preferment apace. In the first place, I am to be married to super-abundantly nice Mr. *Prim*, and by that means I shall forthwith commence Gentlewoman, and become acquainted with people of Quality: Then, no doubt, upon the discovery of some private qualifications that I am Mistress of, I shall soon be resorted to by the greatest men in the Kingdom. Madam, shall I beg a small favour at your Ladyships hands, says one Lord. It lies in your Ladyships power to relieve a person in very great distress, says another Lord. Oh how I'll bristle when they come cringing to me for a Cast of my function.

Minx. Gad a mercy *Doll*.

Doll. But what have you done, Madam, with Sir *Wealthy Plainer*? Certainly he's not to be neglected till he's a little better fleec'd.

Minx. Hang him, an old rivell'd skin impotent Cur, a bundle of dried Kexes would be a better bed fellow.

Doll. What the Devil signifies his Carcass, so his Purse be but profitick.

Minx. Well *Doll*, I'll freely remit both his Carcass and Purse too into your hands, manage him as you think convenient; you may easily contrive to personate me, there is no danger that he can make any discovery of the cheat.

Doll. Faith then I'll about it immediately, I'll go send him a challenge in your name, appoint some convenient place, and should he prove backward, and refuse to bleed freely, I'll first rise the old

Rogue, then beat him into better manners. I know he carries two or three hundred pieces always about him, and I will rip the very Wasteband of his Breeches for him, but I'll find it out; such a sum as that will furnish me a small secret Apartment with an *Indian Paller-Bed*, and a large Glass at the head on't, a set of *Dutch Nudities*, a Silver Chocolate Pot, and a Punch Bowl, and some other pretty utensils that are absolutely necessary for one of my employ.

Minx. Ha, ha, I fancy *Doll* thou't become thy promotion very well, indeed thou hast sometning in thy face that looks very reverend.

Doll. Nay I am confident I shall be as punctual in all the formalities of my Calling as any body. I can double my Chin, pout out a wanton Lip, wag the Head, and tip the wink, as well as e're a standing Bawd in Christendom.

Minx. O rare Madam *Dorothy*.

Doll. Well, Madam, with your leave I will now go look after Sir *Wealthy Plainder*, and manage that affair.

Minx. Do so *Doll*, and I will go see how my Sister *Thoroughshift* goes on in her business. *Exeunt.*

Scene changes to the Garden by Moon-light,

Enter Sir Bellamour Blunt.

Sir Bell. Yonder's the Arbour that trusty *Nibs* promised to decoy *Opbeliatoo*. 'Tis to be hoped that the serenity of the night, and the sweetness of the place, may so becalm her bosom, that it will be the more susceptible of the soft inspirations of love. (*Goes into the Arbour.*)

Enter Sir Wealthy Plainder with a small Trunk, Sir Bell.
peeping out of the Arbour.

Sir Weal. So, under this Bench will I conceal my dear, dear Treasure here, (*Kisses and hugs the Trunk.*) till the damn'd ravenous Mob be quell'd. Sure no body sees me, but the Moon yonder, and a my Conscience, Madam *Luna* scorns to tell tales: had she been a blab of her Tongue, the Gods would never have chose her out for a Midwife — So, now I'll to my *Minky*, and recreate the flesh a little. I'll make the young Jade practice a thousand pretty Dalliances; she shall rub my Ears, clap my Cheeks, scratch my Knees, and tickle me under the short Ribs, e'faith, E e, e, e, e, I'll shew her how, I'll shew her how presently. *Exit.*

Sir Bellamour Blunt comes out of the Arbour.

Sir Bell. A pox of thy damn'd lascivious hide, for an old doting Letcher — However, methinks this proves very lucky. I may certainly, with all the justice in the world, carry off this old villain's

villains below'd Wealth—And so constitute my self Trustee for the much wronged Ophelia.

(Carries the Trunk into the Arbour.)

Enter Ophelia and Nibs.

Nibs. Here is a lovely night, Madam; the Sky looks clear and glorious, the Air is fresh, and the Banks are fragrant.

Oph. The night is pleasant indeed, and the place agreeable.

Nibs. And very suitable for Love Adventures, is it not, Madam?

Oph. The truth on it is, this might be a proper Scene for some of the idle Romantick Stories we meet withal in Novels—As when *Olimpia*, lying under the constraint of severe Parents, being wholly debarr'd the object of her affections, restless in bed, she slips on a loose Garment, takes her Lute, and steals gently forth into the Garden, where, having burthen'd the ambient Air with pressing sighs, and long complain to the regardless Plants, at length the lovely Nymph warbles out some soft and killing words made of her absent Swain. *Celadon*, conceal'd in an adjacent Arbour, surpriz'd with the unlookt for harmony, rushes out of his melancholy covert, flings himself at the feet of his charming Goddess, and there expires in the highest Transport of an amorous passion.

(She speaks this slightly, as ridiculing the matter.)

Nibs. And would not this, Madam, look very prettily, were it to be performed in reality? Pray let me beg of you to begin the story at the Song, and see how fate may order the Consequences.

Oph. I will not deny you a Song, Nibs, but I believe the story as you call it, is like to begin and end with it.

SONG.

ALL things seem deaf to my complaints,
In vain I roam the Groves along.
Hear me ye Loves departed Saints,
That to Elysian shades are gone.
If to my faithful *Celadon* I prove not true,
Let it be both our dooms never to come to you.

Sir Bellamour rushes hastily from the Arbour, and flings himself at the Feet of Ophelia.

Oph. (Sneaks out.) O—h! what piece of rudeness is this?

Nibs. Ha, ha, ha, 'Tis your faithful *Celadon*, Madam, expiring in the transports you just spoke of. And now to go on with the Novel. *Olimpia*, struck at the sudden amazement of her unexpected *Celadon*, continues for some time silent as the night, and senseless as a statue, till recollecting the sufferings of her faithful Swain, a relenting pity soon seizes her trembling heart, pity the kind harbinger of triumphant Love. What then should ensue, but a whole train of Tears, Fires, Flames, Raptures, and so forth, which are things that never admit of a witness. I shall there-

therefore beg leave to drop a hasty Curtzie, (*Curtzies*) and so withdraw.

Exit running.

Sir Bell. (rising.) Thou dear charming Creature !

Ophel. Ha, ha, ha ; what, have you been all this while studying of that Speech——There's a flight with all my heart.

Sir Bell. And must my passion for ever be the subject of your Rail-lery ?

Ophel. Your passion, I suppose, is like other mens, of the same continuance as your courtship.

Sir Bell. Cou'd I suppose my self capable of altering my esteem by a possession, I'd sooner tamely surrender my breast to be possess'd by Furies, nay, by Envy itself, the worst of Fiends, rather than urge you one syllable farther.

Ophel. So, so, I find you are resolv'd to take a share in the Novel ; this is all Romantick to the highest degree.

Sir Bell. I'm not us'd to any thing but truth, Madam.

Sarllil y

Ophel. Pray don't be angry, good Sir ; and I'll give you a piece of truth in return to your truth, you so much boast of——You must know then that my affections are at present a little upon the float ; they may in time fix, and come to a sediment, then if a draught of the dregs of Love will go down with your Constitution, I may perhaps have a dose or two at your service. And so adieu, sweet Sir *Bellamour.* (*Going off.*)

Sir Bell. (laying hold of her.) Hold, Madam.

Oph. How dare you be so saucy ? Unhand me I say, or may I never——

Sir Bell. (loosing her) No imprecations I beseech you Lady, what I have to say nearly concerns your interest.

Oph. Out with it quickly then.

Sir Bell. Do but step into this Arbour with me, and there——

Oph. There you'll play the Satyr perhaps, 'twill concern my interest truly, to give you an opportunity to proceed farther with this brutish force you have so rudely began.

Sir Bell. Don't you thus wrong the innocence of my thoughts.

Oph. If your intentions be just, why can't you make this grand discovery you pretend to, here in the place where we now are ?

Sir Bell. Stay but a moment and I'll convince ye. [*Goes into the Arbour.*]

Oph. What can he be gone for ?——Be it what it will, I am resolv'd I will not stay to be convinced, satisfying a curiosity has ever been very fatal to our Sex.

Exit,

Re-enter Sir Bellamour with the Trunk.

Sir Bell. Ophelia, Ophelia.

Widow Thoroshift above at a window.

Wid. That must be Sir *Bellamour's* voice. I'll take this opportunity and sling him the Letter I have prepared.

(*Flings out a Letter.*)

Sir

Sir Bell. Ha! (*Taking up the Letter*) Whence can this come I wonder? it may perhaps contain what a Virgin modesty might refuse to discover face to face. (*Opens the Letter*) I can by Moon-light perceive that 'tis subscrib'd *Ophelia*, tho I can't in this place read the Contents — I am impatient to read it. *Exit.*

Wid. So, the bait he swallows greedily, and I'll take care to hook him. *Withdraws.*

Enter Doll.

Doll. This is the place appointed; and I'm confident the old Dotard will punctually answer my Defiance — I vow here he comes already.

Enter Sir Wealthy Plainder.

Sir Weal. Minx, Minx, Minky, Minky, ha! sure yonder must be Petticoats that are sailing about there: 'Sboblkins if they be, I will make 'em fly presently. VVhy Minky, Minky.

Doll. So, this Arbour is a convenient place for the execution of my design — Here, here, *Sir Wealthy* (*Calling softly.*)

Sir Weal. VVhere, where?

(*Answering in the same tone.*)

Doll slips into the Arbour, and Sir VVealthy follows her.

Sir Weal. (*within*) A hey! why Hussy, what a murrain art a doing. Nay Minky, don't play the fool with a body at this rate.

Re-enter Doll with Sir VVealthy's Breeches.

Doll. So, there let the old bearded Goat stand and cool himself a little; 'tis to be hoped before morning, the Cuffs brisk thoughts of wrenching may be pretty well over — Now I will go strike up a merry bargain with Mr *Prim* as soon as he pleases: and as I have already taken possession of the Breeches, so to his sweet comfort, shall he find, that I will make bold to wear 'em stoutly, that I will. *Exit.*

Enter Nicky-crack and Minx.

Minx. If I should agree to the proposals you make me, Mr *Nicky-crack*, I fear upon the least dissatisfaction betwixt us, you would be very apt to sing in my Dish, a spice of my former practices.

Nick. Ah, no, no, not in the least, Mrs *Minx* — Come, pray let's be brief in the matter. You have now a pretty Income, for which you may please to remember, that I have been in some measure serviceable to you. I my self am not without a reasonable stock of Ready, with which I don't doubt but I shall riggle my self into some employ or other. And we will live so sweetly.

Minx. And pray what employ do you think would best suit with your Genius?

Nick. My Genins, indeed, will require some very honest employ; VVhat think you of a Tax-Collector, a Military Pay Master, a Change-Broker, or a Solicitor in Parliament?

Minx. A parcel of very consciencious Callings, truly.

Sir Weal. (*hawling out within.*) Ho — lo *Minx*, why what the Devil art a doing, and who is that thou hast got with thee? *Nick.*

Nick, Hark ! Some body calls out, let's go see who it is ?

Minx. I protest 'tis Sir *Wealthy Plainer*, by all means let's unloose him. (*They go into the Arbour and lead out Sir VVealthy with his hands bound*) VVhy what is the matter Sir *Wealthy*, in the name of wonder what have they done to ye ?

Sir *Weal*. Prithee leave fooling at this rate, give me but my Breeches again and all shall be well, faith Child. Then *Minky*, we'll go into thy Chamber, and there we will fairly unrip 'em. Every tenth piece shall be thy own freely, and for each piece I'll have a rubbers at bowls in a Summers day: Ta Doll, di, da, doll, di, da, doll. [*Sings and dances.*]

Minx. Ha ! Now I smoke the business. Ha, ha, ha, he's uncas'd I find. He may Ta doll, di, da, doll long enough before *Doll* will refund again, I'll warrant her. [*aside*] Sir *Wealthy*, I can't imagin what you'd be at. Mr *Nicky* and I are but just come into the Garden, and how you come tied after this manner, and what you have had done to ye, I know no more than the man in yonders Moon, not I, I'll promise ye.

Nick. I profess Sir *Wealthy* I don't know what to think of your Ta, doll, di, da, doll ; for my part I'm afraid your Worship is at present something Lunatick.

Sir *Weal*. Why, what a pox ! wou'd you both perswade me out of my Christian name ? Had not I a Letter from you, Mrs. *Minx*, to meet you here in the Garden ? and accordingly I came. You beckon'd, and call'd me into this Arbour, tyed my hands for me, and then run away with my Breeches.

Minx. Not one syllable of this is truth, by jenkins ; now you make a body sweat.

Nick. In short, Sir *Wealthy*, you are either disturb'd in your brain, or have been most horribly abus'd ; for, upon my salvation, this Lady and I have been together for this half hour, and were but just come into the Garden as you call'd out.

Sir *Weal*. O Lord, O Lord ! such doings as these wou'd make my Brains burst about my Ears, tho my Scull were hoop'd with Steel. May the Gods send I find all safe under the Bench. (*Looks under the Bench, then flings it down in a rage*) Hell, Furies, Blood, Fire, Death, Destruction ; and what is worst of all, Woman, Woman, Woman. I run, I burn, I fly ; I'm here, I'm there, I'm ev'ry where, I'm no where, nor never will be any where again. (*Runs off, tearing like a mad-man.*)

Nick. Why, what is the Devil in Sir *Wealthy* ?

Minx. I believe *Legion* himself has possess'd him : He seems at present even too mad for *Bedlam*.

Nick. Had I but a grant of his body, I'd cage him up e'faith, and shew him about the Country for the Wild Man.

Minx. You had best prevail with my Lord *Courispoll*, to beg him for you.

Nick.

The Town Unmaskt.

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Nick. Ay that would be wife work indeed, to set on a Fool to beg a Mad-man.

Minx. Prithee Mr Nicky-crack, let's go in and examin Doll about this business, I believe she's able to unravel the whole matter.

Nick. Madam, if you think convenient, I'd rather be for tying a knot of our own, than unravelling fifty of other peoples.

Minx. Why look ye, Mr Nicky-crack, I hope you'll give me half an hours time to consider of your proposals. I am not unthoughtful of your former favours. And can at present assure ye, that I hate to be ungrateful. But what requires the most expedition is my Sister Thorosbift's business.

Nick. Madam, I've employ'd Mr. Plodder, my chief Implement of Intelligence, and expect his return every minute. I am confident that by his means I shall know the value of the Merchants stock; and of the substance of the Souldiers preferment to a single grain.

Minx. Well, when that's effected then the Parson goes to work, and Marriage you know is a fruit, that like Nuts generally grows in clusters.

Nick. And egad as soon as the Bough is shak'd, I'll be ready with my open arms to take into my bosom the dear sweet Nut that falls to my share.

Embracing Minx.

Minx. That you may, Mr Nicky-crack, and get at the Kernel without endangering your Teeth by cracking the shell.

Nick. Phoo! pox of cracking of shells, what care I for cracking of shells. Who most depends upon a Maidenhead,
Is at the best, but by a Phantom led.

The end of the fourth Act.

A C T V.

Scene A Room in the House.

Sir Bellamour Blunt with a Letter.

Sir Bell. (*Reads*) Sir, considering the usage I meet withal from the most unnatural of Parents, and being in some measure acquainted with the honourable character you maintain in the world, I have at length resolv'd to confide in your pretensions, and commit my self wholly into your custody, not doubting but I shall meet with a reception worthy your self, and suitable to the present exigencies of your distressed Refugee,

Ophelia

At the end of the Gallery leading to the Back-stairs when the clock strikes one.

Oh happy Summons! This is the place, and I am confident it draws near the time. (*The Clock strikes*) There goes the blessed stroke, from this minute I'll date my account of bliss, which may the Gods multiply till the sum equals the extent of my passion.

En-

The Pretenders : Or,

Enter Widow Thoroshift Maskt, Captain Bownceby, and Broakage, watching her at two several doors.

Sir Bell. (*Running to her and embracing her*) Ophelia! I am not able to say more. But—

Enter Captain Bownceby at a distance.

Capt. Hell and Hand-granades! I have watched to fine purpose, to be at length an eye witness of the loss of my Mistress—No, I'll first be ramm'd into the mouth of a Cannon, and be discharged against my Enemy, with my heels foremost, to kick the breath out of his Stomach. (*Goes up to Sir Bellamour.*) Who are you, Sir, that dare shew this familiarity with a Lady to whom Captain Bownceby make pretensions. If you think fit, Sir, to dispute my Title, you shall find it writ in legible Characters upon this invincible Bilboa Blade. (*Draws his Sword, retires to some distance and flourishes it.*) Do ye see, do ye see, Sir?

Sir Bell. If you'll walk a little nearer, Sir, you shall see me break your Bilboa Blade about the ears of you, and imprint its Characters upon your skull; I am confident 'tis soft enough to take the impression.

Capt. Ha! A rough Dog! I fear this: what a damn'd sowre look he has?

Enter Broakage.

Bro. Gad I'll venture out. Captain I see you are like to be engaged, and tho we are Rivals as to the Widow yonder, yet, with your leave, we will joyn our Forces against the common Enemy. (*Draws his Sword.*)

Capt. With all my heart, honest Broakage. Come, prithee do thee march in the Front, and let me bring up the Rear. By my experience in War I'll undertake to make good the Retreat, should we chance to be over-press'd.

Bro. No, pray Captain do you take the honour of leading, because you know how to give the Onset with advantage.

Capt. Nay, good Mr Broakage.

Bro. Nay, dear Captain.

Capt. I protest you shall.

(*Putting each other forward by turns.*)

Bro. I vow it must be you.

Capt. What if we first parley, and make our demands in form, and upon refusal, then fall on?

Bro. Do so, Captain.

Capt. Hark you, Sir, will you surrender the VVidow, or not?

Sir Bell. Pray, Madam Ophelia let me beg of you to withdraw for a moment, whilst I correct the insolence of these two Coxcombs.

Capt. Death and Thunderbolts! 'tis none of Ophelia, 'tis the Widow Thoroshift.

Bro. Odsniggers, Sir, 'tis the VVidow Thoroshift; do but look, and if it does not prove so, we'll be content you shall bear her off; and we our selves will attend your Triumph in chains.

Sir Bell. (*Looking earnestly upon the Widow.*) Ha! am I impos'd upon? Since 'tis so, Gentlemen, pray take the Lady, I will surrender before you draw down your Artillery. I must confess I look upon the Fort so battered, that it is not worth the keeping.

Exit.

Wid. Am I not only discovered, but affronted with a second contempt? Villain I will have thy blood. (*Offers to snatch the Captains Sword.*)

Capt. and Broa. (*laying hold on her.*) Patience, patience, good Lady.

Wid. Loose me, ye Poltroons ye. Had either of you the respect for me you

you pretend to have, or the least dram of Courage, you would a ster him, and cut his Throat this moment.

Bro. Captain, Captain, you understand the business, prithee after him, and fetch back his head to expiate for his sawcy crime.

Capt. Brimstone and Blunderbuss Bullets, Madam, had I thought it manners to have done it before you, I'd have whipt it off before he had stirred a step. But if your Ladyship pleases to lay me any night in Ambuscade under his Bed, if I leave him an inch of neck to tie his Cravat upon in the morning, may I end my days under a Hedge, and have my Eyes closed with Caterpillars.

Broa. And after that, Madam, if ever he troubles your Ladyship more, I'll undertake to decoy him aboard a Ship, and so Spirit him away to one of my Plantations.

Wid. Gentlemen, now my passion is something over, I am ready to acknowledge that I am equally oblig'd to both of you, for thus espousing my Quarrel. — 'Tis a miserable case that I am forc'd to keep my self on fair terms with such a couple of ninny Lovers as these. (*aside*) Gentlemen, I am now going to see trusty Nibs married. She has got one of our Modern-Play Lovers, that lies in wait for her, and yet knows nothing of the matter.

Capt. And then, Madam.

(*whispers her in one ear.*)

Broa. And then, Madam.

(*Runs and whispers her in t'other.*)

Capt. You are very civil, Mr. Broakage, thus to take out of one ear what I whisper'd into the other.

Wid. No jarring, Gentlemen, on penalty of my eternal displeasure. As soon as Nibs is married, we'll get together, and dance till morning.

Capt. Captain Bounceby shall be ready to attend your Ladyship, with ev'ry Caper five foot high.

(*Capers.*)

Broa. And your obedient Slave, Mr. Broakage, shall Coupee and Coulee to your Ladyship, as dextrously as a Beau does to himself at the great Glass in the Chocolate-house.

Wid. These Beaus have a fine time on't, when such Blockheads as thee must have a fling at 'em. (*aside.*) Gentlemen, I am your servant. Ex. Wid.

Capt. Now, Sir, the common danger is over, what if we about again as we were?

Broa. You are in the right, I protest, Captain; but first let's embrace. Your Servant, noble Captain. Exeunt.

Capt. Your Servant, sweet Mr

Broakage--Now mind to turn short upon your left heel at the word of command. To the right about, march!

(*They face about at the same time and march off*)
Enter Ld Courtipoll, Vainthroat, and Sweetny.

Sweet. I vow I am glad to see your noble Lordship safe returned; how generously it was done; thus to expose your precious person for all our safeties.

Ld Court. As it happened there was no danger, the business only proved a Match at Foot-ball in Moor-Fields, but I have been so plagued with the insolence of onstables, not one of the Scoundrels would know me to be a man of quality; but after abundance of barbarous usage, I was hurried before a City Magistrate, who at first very hastily sent word, that we were the best man in the Kingdom I must be secured till morning. But at length upon much solicitation, he and his wife examined the business, and upon her command I was set at liberty. Upon my honour she was a very pretty woman, and took occasion to draw up her Breasts, mump her Mouth, and say, she believed I was a person of quality by my white Hand and diamond ring.

The Pretenders : Or,

Sweet. O goodness ! sure every body may know that by your graceful deportment.

Vain. It is fifty to one, my Lord, but you'll have her at Court e're long a soliciting Knighthood for her Husband, and then——

Ld Court. Then I'll take care she shall succeed e'faith. And when the beast of her Husband has his shoulders loaded with a Sirdom, it shall be my business to give the addition of a corniferous badge, and adorn his front with a courtly Cuckoldom——But *Mrs Sweetmy*, where is *Ophelia* ?

Sweet. Alas poor young Lady, she's very dutifully attending upon her Father——Sir *Wealthy*, my Lord, is of a sudden run quite besides himself. See where she comes along with him.

Enter Sir Wealthy Plainder very melancholy, attended by Ophelia.

Oph. Will you be pleased, Sir, to take a little repose ?

Sir Weal. No, Child, lust and villany never sleep. *(very gruff.)*

Sweet. Good lack, what is to be done with him, see how strangely thoughtful he looks.

Sir Weal. Be gone, *Ophelia*, there's a cup of Poyson by you, nay, the deadly draught was prepar'd by thy Fathers own hand ; be gone I say.

Oph. This sudden care of me is wondrous strange ; by this my Father rather seems to have recovered than lost his senses. *(aside.)* I'll go try what account I can get of the occasion of all this. *Exit.*

Vain. Why how now old fellow, what art run mad ?

Sir Weal. Yes, young Coxcomb, I am mad.

Vain. Then here's one shall match thee faith. *(aside.)* My Lord, a person of your universal knowledge, may find out the nature of this Gentlemans distemper, and by that means a recovery may be thought on.

Ld Court. Ha ? let's see what's to be done with him ; why if the Gentlemans Noddle has sprung a Leak, the best way will be to ply the pumps. Mr *Vainbroat*, do you take the other arm, and I will manage this, and let's work him a little.

Sir Weal. *(flying from 'em)* Loose me, thou fantastick Vanity, thou finisht folly.

Ld Court. You are very familiar with your betters, methinks good Mr Madman.

Sweet. Its a sign indeed the poor Gentlemans distraction is very great, he could never have thought that your Lordship could possibly have been a fool else.

Ld Court. Let us consider Mr *Vainbroat*——By what I can apprehend of him he only affects a surly humour, and under the pretence of madnes takes the liberty of being lawey ; prithe let us laugh him out on't.

Vain. With all my heart, my Lord, say what you will, I will have a laugh at your service——I think I may safely promise that, for the Coxcomb is scarce capable of saying any thing but what is very ridiculous, and yet has the vanity to think a man laughs at the gayety of his parts. *Aside*

Ld Court. Ha, ha, ha, what, Sir *Wealthy* has my quondam Mistress put thee thus in the dumps. Its a sign thou wert a Madman to venture coming after a man of my quality——Mr *Vainbroat*.

Vain. My Lord. Oh——ha, ha, ha. S'bud I'd forgot to laugh at the right top. *Aside.*

Ld Court. Come Knight, prithe cheer up Man, I'll make thy posterity amends.

amends for thy misfortunes, I'll infuse into *Ophelia*, such a stream of sense and solidity, that she shall become the mother of a Generation distinguish'd by the name of the *Marachiavellian Courtipollions*.

Vain. Ha, ha, ha, there I was ready for you, my Lord.

Sir Weal. And I am as ready to despise both your impertinences.

Ld Court. I find nothing will move the sullen Sor, prithee for *Ophelia's* sake, see him safe to his Chamber, while Mrs *Sweetny* and I go and push on my affairs with the Virgin that I have now upon my hands

Exeunt Ld Court and Sweet.
(*mimicking Ld Courtipoll*)

Vain. Like a man of your quality

Enter Nickycrack.

Nick. O *Sir Wealby*, I was looking for you. Pray don't give way to this strange sort of spleenatick humour; do but walk in, and you'll soon find how matters stand.

Sir Weal. What care I how matters stand, I could now, with a steddly unconcern, see the crazy props of Nature slip their hold, and all this giddy world stagger into eternal Confusion.

Exit.

Nick. Ha! what is the old Rogue turned Stoick?

Vain. Faith I can't tell what to make of him, nor I——But *Nickycrack* I am in expectation of flinging of Stockings, and lapping of Sack-poffets, and so forth. Is there any thing to be done to night or not?

Nick. Yes faith, there will be tickling work anon; you shall see me take my turn too.

Vain. E'gad it shall go very hard but I'll have some tickling amongst ye. Bite of the Bridle as soon as you will, I'll take my turn in the Saddle I'll warrant ye.

Nick. See here comes one couple already; the finical Mr *Prim* has very nicely elpoused honest Country *Doll*.

Enter Prim leading Doll.

Vain. Joy to thee *Doll*. What has the Court then struck a lasting Covenant with the Country?

Nick. Yes indeed, poor *Doll* here has at length been bribed to betray herself into the bonds of Matrimony.

Prim. Gentlemen, no more plain *Doll*, I beseech you, I am confident she can now lay a just claim to the title of Madam *Prim*, and I hope that term won't in the least damnify your voices in the expression, Gentlemen; prithee my dear, mind my way of talking, you must now strive to leave off your Country Dialect, and give to every word you speak, a pretty gentle courtly twang

Enter Nibs.

Nick. Here's Mrs *Nibs*, I dare say is married too, by the solemn paw she takes, and by that pretty blush which she cunningly assumes, to bid a formal adieu to what she has long parted withal. Is it not so, Mrs *Nibs*?

Nibs. Yes indeed, I am fast enough; but what's the jest, is, the man that has married me, knows not a syllable of the business.

Vain. If half the Husbands in the Kingdom were to be kept in the same ignorance, & my Conscience they'd have reason enough to think themselves happy fellows. Were I to advise you, I'd never let him know it, lest he should repent his bargain, ha forsooth?

Nibs. Pray, Mr *Vainbroat*, for the future, vouchsafe to let your Forsooths be Madams when you speak to me, for I assure you I have married a man of Honour.

G 2

Nick.

The Pretenders : Or,

Nick. You won't pretend to take place of Madam *Prim* I hope.

Nibs. Madam *Prim* ! Ha, ha, ha, that's a good one e'faith.

Prim. Pray, Madam, why this publick derision of a person that has married a Gentleman.

Nibs. A Gentleman, ha, ha, ha. Had my Husband no better a pretence to his gentility; I should blush to hear my self Madam'd. If you will give me leave, I can give you an exact account of your pedigree.

Vain. By all means let's hear it.

Nibs. Well, then, I dont love to say much, but what I do say shall be to the purpose. *Jacob Scone*, the Beadle of *Cripplegate* Parish, will be ready at any time to justify upon Oath what I am going to say. You must know then, that this very Gentleman who pretends himself of *Prim Castle* in the borders of *Scotland*, was not many years since a squawling bantling, laid in a Hand-basket upon a Bulk in *Woodstreet*, and being taken care of by the Parish, old *Scone* the Beadle was his Godfather, and afterwards—

Prim. You're a base Detractor of my Honor, and I'll have you—

Vain. Nay, hold, hold, let's hear the full charge before you make your reply, good Mr *Prim*.

Nibs. Afterwards I say, this Gentleman Mr *Prim*, when he was grown a little up, was put in among the Blue-coat Boys, and my Lord *Courtispoll* being one day visiting *Christ's-Hospital*, his Lordship discovering something in the youths face that promis'd a future dexterity in the subtle vocation of pimping, he was pleased to entertain him in his service, where he has continued ever since.

Prim. O dem her discovery.

(*Biting his Thumbs.*)

Vain. and *Nick.* Ha, ha, ha.

Doll. E'faith *Nibs*, if I ben't even with you for thus publickly exposing Mr *Prim*, I'll be bound to forfeit all the famous qualifications of my Sex, and be a scandalous Apostate to the whole race of Womankind.

Vain. Nay, not so, pray child, that would be the way to baulk the *Dévil* of his due, and it is pity he should be wrong'd of one single Member of the Sex.

Nick. I find Mr *Prim*, your Lady does not require much instruction in her speech : methinks her Dialect is very courtly of a sudden.

Vain. No, nor in any thing else relating to the Town, I'll pass my word for't. I dare say Madam *Prim* here, knows as much of assignation, snapping, fastning, loosening, and counteffetching, with all the numerous turns of Jilting and Coquetry, as well as ever a Hackney Coach-plyer, Pit-padder, or Gallery-gallopier about the Town of *London*.

Prim. Death ! is it so too?

(*Stamping and biting his nails.*)

Nick. and *Vain.* Ha, ha, ha.

Enter Captain Bounceby singing.

Capt. The danger is over, the danger is over ; Ta, doll, di, da, da, ra.

Nick. How came you empty handed then ? where's the Bride ?

Capt. She's safe enough boy, you shall see her betwixt a pair of Sheets with me presently, and if you lie near me, you shall hear me a thundering it a-way, a hammering out of young *Hercules's*, ye dog you.

Vain. Sad they'll be very wooden ones if they're like their Father. *Aside.*

Nick. But if you have got the *Widow*, Captain, pray what have you done with the Merchant ?

Capt.

Capt. Ah poor *Broakage*, I cannot imagin what will become of the puppy, it's fifty to one but he has already knotted his Garters, and is gaping about for some convenient noosing place or other.

Nick. Here he comes e'faith, as merry as your Worship.

Enter Broakage Singing.

Bro. Now, now the Fight is done; Ta, di, doll, da, ra, da. The Widow's mine own, faith boys. Now, Mr Captain, you may march about your business as soon as you please, ha, ha, ha.

Capt. Why what's the fellow distracted, ye *Nehemian* Ninnhammer you, I say I have married the Widow.

Bro. Why ye *Belzebubbian* Blunderbus ye, I say I have married the Widow.

Nick. You are both very confident of the matter, methinks, be it how it will, it is time for me to look after my own Match: but to prevent disputes in my case, you shall see me enter with my Bride in my hand I'll warraunt ye. *Exit.*

Nibs. No quarrelling, pray Gentlemen, since you have both married the Widow, why should you fall out about the matter?

Capt. What sayst thou, *Jeronimo*? Peace or War, the Olive branch or the *Bilboa* Blade?

Bro. Why faith Captain, let's have a Truce at the least, since we have both courted her in amity, and married her in amity, e'ne let us both keep her in amity—Here comes the Lady, pray let her decide the business.

Enter Widow Thorosshift. A Table and Candles.

Vain. Madam, here is a great Controversie, which of these two Gentlemen does your Ladyship design to own for a Husband?

Wid. To deal plainly with you, it's scarce in my power to tell; they were both so urgent for privacy, that having neither light to discern, nor speaking loud enough to distinguish a voice, all that I know is, that a Husband I have; but which of these two Gentlemen 'tis—

Bro. 'Tis me, by *Jerico*.

Capt. By *Jerico*, ye sneaking Whores-bird. 'Tis me by *Jove*, Madam, and all the rest of the thundring powers above.

Wid. That will soon be decided by the contents of this little Ceremonial Implement. *(Showing a Ring.)*

Vain. Pray then let that little Ceremonial Implement, as you call it, clear this matter in dispute.

Wid. It shall so, Sir, I'll read the Motto, then let the Gentleman from whose hands I receiv'd it, claim me for his own lawful Spouse till death do us part. *(Reads.)* The Widow's my own, Flesh, Blood, and Bone.

Bro. E'gad so she is, and accordingly I'll take possession.

Capt. Why what the Devil then became of mine, ha?

Wid. That, good Captain, you shall know presently. *Nibs*, read the poesy of your Ring.

Nibs. *(Reads.)* I swear by my Courage, I'll rummage your Stowage.

Capt. Hell, Blood, and Furies, thy Stowage! why what a pox shall I get by that, ha?

Omni. Ha, ha, ha.

Nibs. Your Servant, sweet Captain, indeed you promis'd I should be a Captains Lady, but I did not think you were so kind to design me for your self, good Captain—Come, Sir, don't be discouraged, I'll undertake to do

do those good offices for you with your General, that shall make you bounce forward in preferment at a strange rate.

Vain. Like enough, faith *Nibs*, your bowncing in the business may do much. A nights service for a General in the Trenches, will do more for the Captains advancement, than his own service in Siege Trenches all his life time. But here comes a couple hand in hand that have made sure work. [*Enter Nicky-crack leading Minx*] And here comes another couple, tho the Lady at present seems to carry it a little too shy for a Wife.

Enter Ophelia, followed by Sir Bellamour with a Trunk.

Sir Bell. I have told you, Madam, how I came to discover it, and knowing what usage you have met withal, I did believe my self bound in justice to secure it. Here tis for you, (*Gives her the Trunk*) Its value I know not. If you think my concern for your Interest merits a good esteem for you, I shall look upon my self over-paid.

Oph. I am nor, Sir, to be brib'd into an esteem ; but here comes my Father, to whom I suppose it may properly belong, I shall therefore take care to restore it.

Enter Sir Wealthy Plainer.

Oph. Here is something, Sir, which this Gentleman, *Sir Bellamour Blunt*, would willingly force upon me, knowing that 'tis my duty to acquaint you with what offers are made me, I humbly remit it into your hands.

Sir Weal. (*Taking the Trunk*) Ha ! is it so ? Well Child, this I shall take care on, and if you think good to make the Gentleman any acknowledgement for his piece of service, pray do it with your person, if *Sir Bellamour* will accept of you without the Casket.

Sir Bell. Most willingly, *Sir Wealthy*.

Oph. Then I must blushing own, that my inclinations suits with my Fathers commands ; and my only regret is, that so deserving a Gentleman as I believe *Sir Bellamour* to be, should meet with so poor a bargain.

Sir Bell. Madam, I love you, and the possessing the object lov'd, is, I think, the greatest treasure that this world affords.

Enter Ld Courtipol.

Vain. Here's strange coupling, my Lord, of a sudden ; your Virgin too has given you the slip, e'faith, and tho not Parson-fetter'd, yet she has fairly surrenderd herself in order to it.

Ld Court. Ay ! say you so ? then it must be so.

Knocking without, Doll goes off, and immediately returns with a Letter.

Doll. Here's a Letter directed to Mr *Nicky-crack*, to be delivered with all the speed imaginable.

Nick. I guess from whence it comes ; but be the Contents what they will it comes too late for prevention. (*Looking in the Letter.*) O miserable, miserable news I protest ! for my part I han't power to read it.

Vain. (*Taking the Letter.*) Let me see it, I'll read it read it out contain what it will. (*Reads.* Sir, as soon as possibly I could get my full intelligence I have sent you this, to give you an account, that Captain *Bownceby*, as you call him, is no Captain, but a blustering Subaltern Officer that was cashier'd for cowardice

Capt. Blood and Fire-balls ! Furies and Fugacies.

(raves about.)

Doll. Ha, ha, ha, alas poor *Nibs* ! you are a Captains Lady, forsooth, and have married a man of Honour, ha, ha, ha.

Vain. But to proceed (*Reads.*) As for Mr *Brookage*, he is no Merchant, but has been employed by the *Jews* to drive some rooking bargains upon the Change,

Change, where he is at present so far out of Credit, that if apprehended, I believe his ears must atone for his former practices. *Town Servant*,
Peter Plodder, *Intelligencer*.

Bro. A curse upon his Plodship!

Nick. Why what out of countenance, Mr *Broakage*, why it is but moving into one of your foreign Plantations man, hah?

Wid. Come, cheer up, Mr *Broakage*, to tell ye truth my circumstances are as bad as yours can be, and since we have trickt one another, there's no remedy now, but to rest satisfied, and lay our heads together, how we may sham old Creditors, colloque in with new ones, make a tearing figure, and so, trick all the world besides.

Nick. I hope, my Lord, I have no ways incurr'd your Lordships displeasure, by taking possession of a Relict of your Lordships.

Ld Court. What my Country Pug married, ha?

Minx. Your Country Pug knows as much of the Town as another body; and tho by my Country pretensions, I have made shift to cull your Lordship out of a Settlement, yet I do not question but I shall make as just a Wife to Mr *Nicky-crack* here, as any sits at my Lady Mayoreiss Table, at a Lord Mayors Feast.

Vain. That I believe you may, Madam, and hold on dealing with the Court into the bargain.

Ld Court. Ha! since you are so pert, Mrs *Minx*, I can satisfy you that your Settlement is not worth one farthing, it's drawn upon an Estate that I can make no Title to.

Nick. O fie! I hope not so, my Lord, that can never be acted like a man of Honour.

Ld Court. But it can be acted like a Statesman tho, and that's my pretensions, Sir.

Sir Weak. Now good people, give a Madman leave to speak: I have at length observed, that for the procuring of this Devil of Wealth we stick at no Baseness, and the possessing it does generally serve to foment our Villanies. I will therefore before all these witnesses, voluntarily part with my greatest store, and put it into the hands of a Gentleman, that if I mistake not, is Master of such virtuous inclinations, that will direct him in the right use of it. Here, Sir *Bellamour*, (*Gives him the Trunk*) let what's in here serve to guild Matrimony, and make the bitter dose of woman go down the better.

Vain. Then Joy to my old friend, Sir *Bellamour Blunt*, and to his beautiful *Ophelia*. If there can be such a thing as Felicity in a married state, it must certainly be found in such a well match'd pair as these.

Wid. As far as I find, here is every body well match'd.

Ld Court. Come then, let us grace these solemnities with a Dance: but the next Virginity Game I undertake, shall be play'd with more politic Caution, I'll pawn my Honour for't.

A DANCE

Nick. Now Gentlemen, let each man to bed with his own Wife.

And however most of us——

May branded seem, for being old offenders,

In feats of Love let none be bare pretenders.

E P I

EPILOGUE

Spoken by Mrs. MOOR.

TH E writing Plays, a sort of Lottery is,
There's many Blanks for one good lucky Prize.
Our Author hopes he has your humour hit,
And now by me his Proxy does submit
To own this place the Judgment-seat of Wit,
But does avow no Criticks vote is good;
Butchers are ne're return'd in case of Blood.
Who're for Justice does on them rely,
Does the same thing as Counsel with a Spy.
Let each free soul, his proper Verdict tell,
And pin no faith on Critick Infidel.
Twas your applause first drew the Poet in;
Won't you then spare whom you intic'd to sin?
In comick Socks still let him trip the Stage,
And stigmatize the follies of the age.
Till by your smiles he has such vigour won,
May make him dare to draw the Buskin on.
High in exence who wd not his utmost do,
When he's to treat such gallant Guests as you?
If once he gets you, he has won his ends;
You are the worst of foes, but best of friends.
Let ranting Coxcombs scorn an Audience from,
He only writes, who writes to please the Town.

FINIS.